The African Communist

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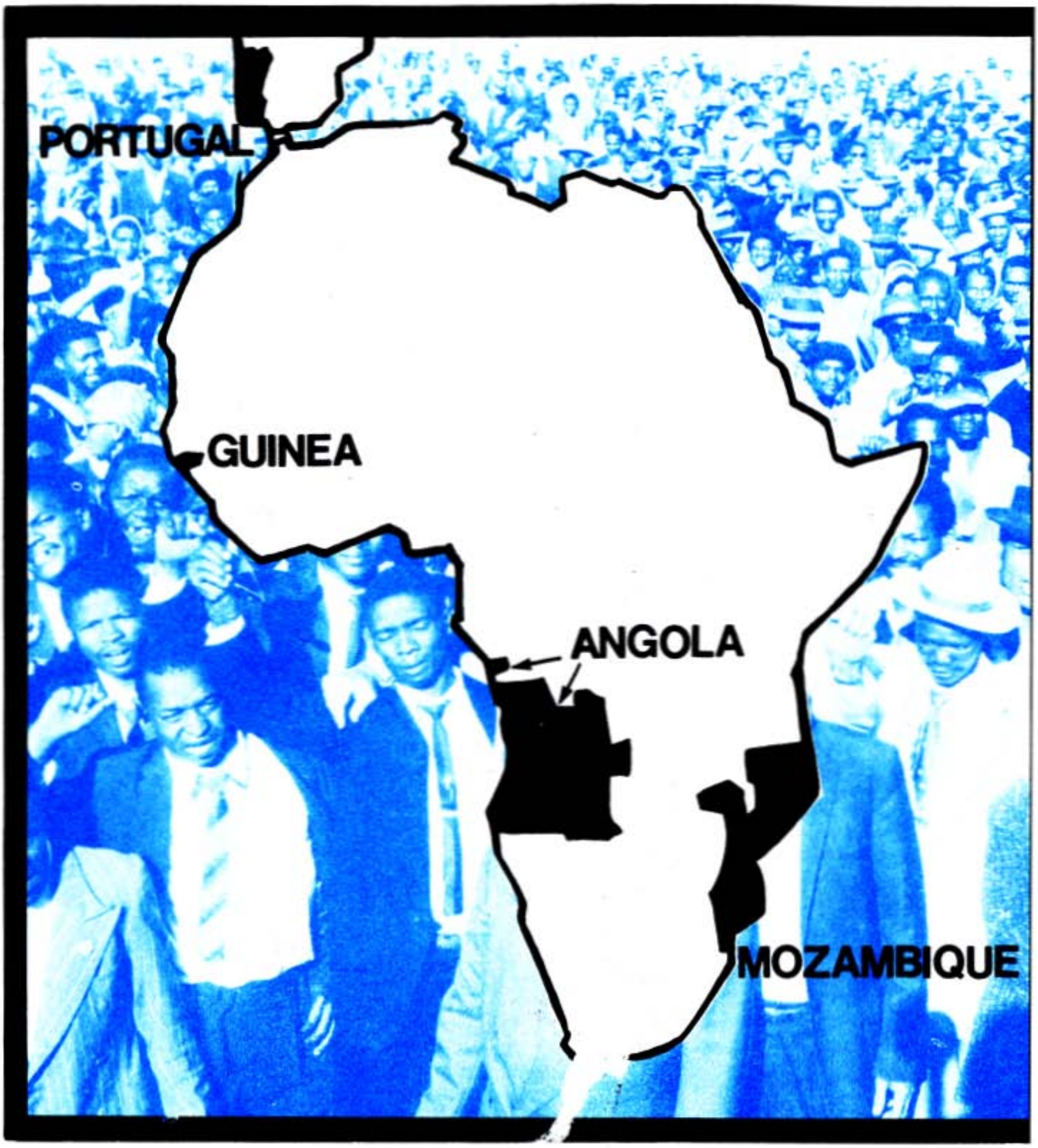

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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No. 59 Fourth Quarter 1974

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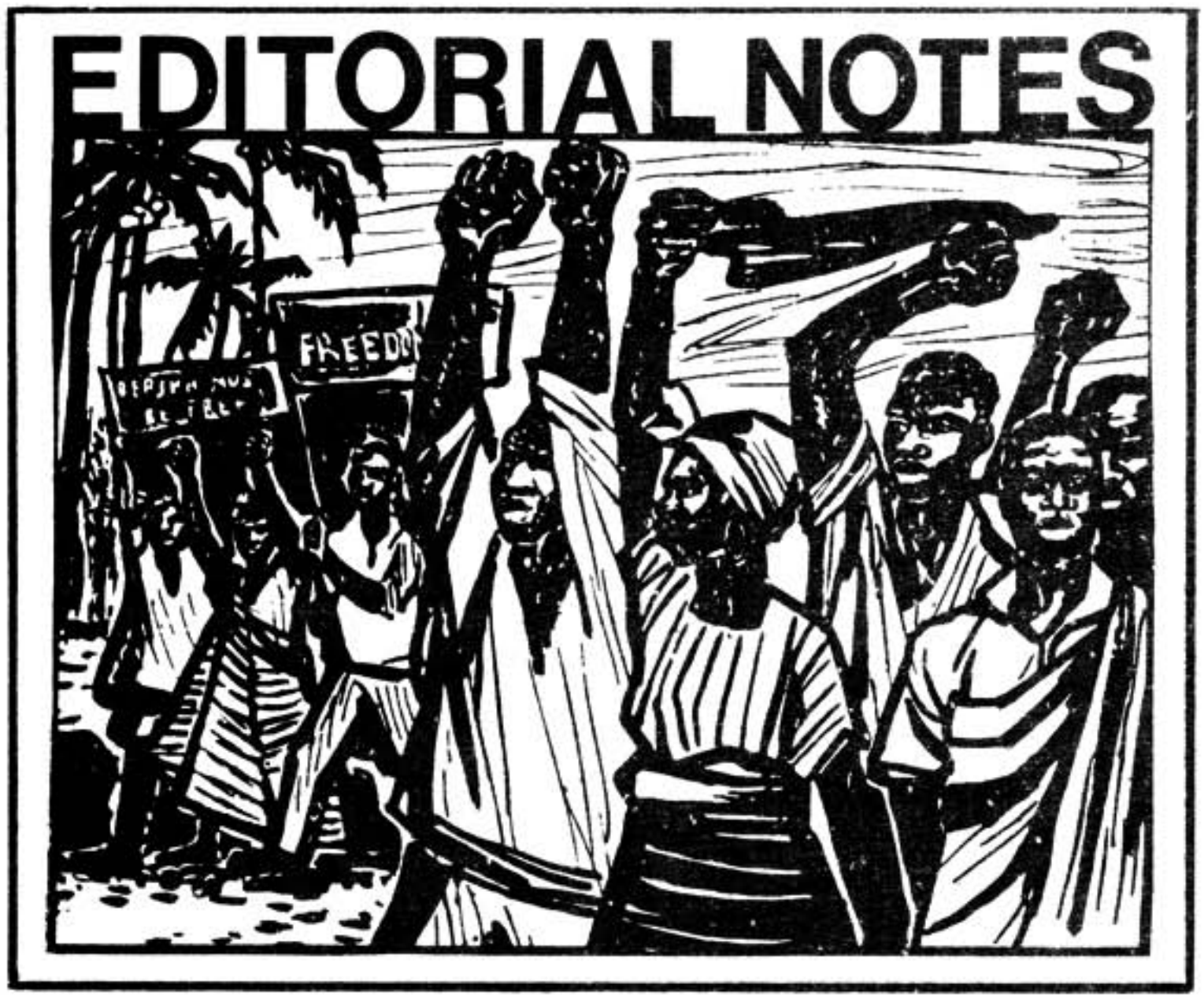

Death of MICHAEL HARMEL

The untimely sudden death of Michael Harmel in Prague in June of this year is a loss which will be felt by the whole South African revolutionary movement. It will be felt especially by *The African Communist*, on whose Editorial Committee he had served since its inception in 1959, for a considerable part of that time as editor. There is scarcely a single issue of this journal which does not, somewhere, contain a piece from his prolific pen. Those pieces, except perhaps to the insiders or those with an eye for his literary style, are not always readily identifiable, save perhaps for those which appeared under one

of the pseudonyms he used in these pages, – A. Lerumo. But his contribution, both in sheer volume, and in the original and critical Marxist insights which inspired it, has been larger than anyone outside the Editorial Committee can appreciate.

Yet for all his vast contribution, the African Communist has never been the 'personalised' journal of its editor bearing his special, idiosyncratic stamp. It has been, as Michael was always at pains to make it, a party journal, expressing the main lines of policy and interpretation of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party. Michael was, above all else, a party man, his special talents and abilities at all times subordinated to the collective guidance and the collective work of the party. It was in his capacity as a full time Communist Party functionary that he took on the editorship of this journal; it was in the capacity of a disciplined Party member that he shared in the collective working of the Editorial Board which has given this journal a consistent policy and style both at the times he was editing it, and at the times when other duties prevented him from doing so – as was the case in recent months when he was seconded by the South African Party to work in the editorial offices of *World Marxist Review in Prague.*

It will, without doubt, be difficult for the Editorial Board of this journal to maintain its past standards without the assistance of his productive talents.

Michael Harmel's reputation outside our own ranks has derived chiefly from his writings, which have appeared regularly over many years in this and many other journals of Marxist, liberation and left-progressive character. This literary outpouring was indeed a large part of his work in recent years. But it would do less than justice to him if he were to be remembered only for his writings, only as a polemicist and propagandist. For in truth his other contributions to the internal growth and history of the South African Party have probably been more important, and of longer influence on the course of history.

Michael became a communist while a student in Britain. He returned to South Africa shortly before the start of World War 2. The party was at a low ebb, struggling to recover from the wasting effects of years of internal dissension and factional strife. In Johannesburg, where he came to live, the party existed precariously in the shadows of a sort of 'undergroundism', caused partly by state repression, but also brought

upon itself through its own weakness and divisions.

But growing up inside the party was a band of young communists of all race groups, who had a different conception of what a Marxist party should be – a united, disciplined band of revolutionaries, armed with theoretical clarity, engaging in every struggle of the masses under a centralised leadership and based on democratic subordination of party minorities to the majority – a party of the Bolshevik type. Michael joined with this group in seeking to turn the party's attention from inner disputation to mass work amongst the working people, from the sectarian polemic to public agitation on a wide scale.

Michael's contribution to the success of the transformation of the Party into a truly Marxist-Leninist Party is hard to quantify. He brought with him a consistent Marxist orientation, an original mind and a great propagandist talent. Though he was then, as always in his political life, one amongst a collective, his contribution to the resurrection of the Johannesburg District Committee from the low depths of 1938 to the mass popular organisation of the 1950's was second to none.

All his life, in everything he did, the party came first. Immediately after the dissolution of the party in 1950 in the face of the Suppression of Communism Act, he joined forces with those party members who had maintained their revolutionary traditions, and actively participated in the work of organising a party in illegal conditions. Once again, as he had been throughout the previous period, he became a full-time functionary of the Party, and remained so for the rest of his life.

When house-arrested in 1962, with his capacity for active work critically curtailed, he left the country illegally, at the decision of the Party centre, to take up abroad those functions for which he was so well fitted, including the editing of this journal whose continued prod-

uction from inside the country had become impossible.

It was during the years of illegal activity that Michael made some of his most important written contributions to South African communist literature, including a draft of the present party programme, and a brilliantly original exposition of the South African society as colonialism of a special type embodied now in the programme, and marking the highest point of South African communist interpretation of the social and political character of the country.

These, and many other contributions buried in the anonymity of collective work, remain as the real memorial of the part played by this distinguished comrade in our country's history. It is a memorial which will stand long after the shock and sorrow of his passing have faded.

SOCIALISM FOR AFRICA

We deeply regret that, as a result of the death of comrade Harmel, the series of articles on 'Socialism for Africa' which he was writing under his pseudonym of A. Lerumo, has to be discontinued.

CRITICAL MOMENTS OF HISTORY

For a social revolution to succeed, power must be effectively transferred from one class in society to another. This is not just a matter of determining whose finger is on the trigger, but who owns and controls the means of production and distribution. In a fascist dictatorship the military may appear to be masters of the situation, but in fact they are merely the servants of the ruling class. Under fascism, that class is the class of the exploiters, the big bourgeoisie and monopolists who have called in the military to protect their vested interests against the demands of the people. The dictatorship of the proletariat, on the other hand, is necessary to protect the revolutionary gains of the working class, to suppress the forces acting to reinstate the bourgeoisie, to smash all attempts at counter-revolution, and to ensure that the economic base of the exploiting class is eliminated once and for all, that the class itself ceases to exist.

The revolutionary process is very complicated and cannot be completed in a short time, because it is not only the fate of men and

their property which is being decided, but also the currency of their ideology, their philosophy or religion, which often continue stubbornly to survive despite the political, economic and social transformation which the revolution may be fashioning on all sides of them. A factory may change hands overnight, but the former owner may refuse to change his mind for the rest of his life, and his family may be influenced by him. How else explain the phenomenon of a Pasternak or a Solzhenitsyn continuing to cherish their antiquated and reactionary notions 50 years after the Russian revolution, which has brought such obvious benefits, not only to the overwhelming majority of the Soviet peoples, but also to the peoples of other countries who, thanks to Soviet power, have been able to throw off the shackles of imperialism and, enjoy the possibility of exercising any meaningful independence?

It is with these thoughts in mind that we must regard the changes of government which have taken place recently in Portugal and Greece. Of course, the whole world rejoiced when the fascist regimes in both countries were broken. Whatever happens afterwards, no one can ignore the fact that a combination of internal and external pressures has made it impossible for two of the most bloodthirsty and repressive regimes in Europe to continue functioning in the old way. That momentous gain can never be wiped out. Neither Europe, nor Africa will ever be the same again. Moreover, the gains which have been achieved by the peoples of Portugal and Greece have in turn helped to strengthen the popular forces elsewhere in the world – Guinea Bissau, Angola and Mozambique and the other Portuguese colonies; in Spain, Rhodesia and South Africa, where the former allies of Portugal are now more threatened than ever before. These victories for the democratic and progressive forces in Portugal and Greece, for the African freedom fighters, are of momentous importance in the worldwide battle against imperialism, national oppression and racism, and represent a great step forward by humanity in its march towards the next stage of its development – socialism and the ultimate elimination of class antagonism and class war.

The forces which brought about the changes in Portugal and Greece respectively are, of course, very different, and the situation in one country is by no means a copy of that in the other. But one factor is common to both countries – and that is that the class war continues, though with new forms, strategies and tactics. The reactionary forces in

both countries still exist, in many cases their economic power base is unchanged, and they are fighting desperately to retain what they have and to recover lost ground. Both Portugal and Greece remain members of NATO, and it can be taken for granted that world capitalism and its agents will be working overtime to ensure that both countries remain reliable bastions of this anti-Soviet and pro-imperialist alliance.

It is one of the ironies of the European situation (as seen at the time of writing) that it seems it was the imperialists themselves who, by plotting the downfall of Archbishop Makarios, in the end brought down with him the Greek colonels' regime itself. The imperialists called Makarios the Castro of the Mediterranean, and they compared Cyprus with Cuba. However, though their plans may have gone somewhat astray, they still retain overall control. The Karamanlis regime in Greece, whatever its relations with the military, is still of the extreme right wing. And the independence of Cyprus, which the imperialists regarded as a danger to their interests in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, has been destroyed. Only the imperialists stand to gain from the division of Cyprus which has been brought about by the invasion of the Turkish forces, and this is no doubt the reason why the Cyprus conflict has been regarded with such complacency by both Britain and America, who could have stopped it in its tracks if they had really wanted to.

Nothing could be more cynical than the Geneva talks between the British, Turkish and Greek governments, from which the legitimate Government of Makarios itself is excluded. The fate of the island's population is being decided by the imperialist powers behind the backs of those most directly concerned.

The restoration of freedom and independence to Cyprus, the grant of immediate independence to Guinea Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, the strengthening of the democratic front in Portugal, the democratisation of Greece – all these are the demands which have been presented by the events in Europe and Africa during the recent months, and which are crying out for an immediate answer. Some of the worst log-jams of European politics have been broken. Tremendous forces have been set in motion by these cataclysms; new possibilities and perspectives have been opened up for the democratic working class and national liberation forces of Europe and Africa. The progressive forces of the whole world must throw every effort into the struggles of the

coming months to ensure that the balance of power, which is shifting before their very eyes, is moved decisively to the left.

COLOUREDS DESTROY APARTHEID COUNCIL

Despite every Government trick to keep it going, the Coloured Representative Council has been destroyed as an instrument of the Government's apartheid policy. At the session of the Council held in Cape Town last July, the resolution introduced by the opposition Labour Party expressing no confidence in the policy of separate development and 'all its institutions, including the Coloured Representative Council' and calling for representation for all people in Parliament was carried. This represented the first defeat for the Government-supporting clique headed by chairman Tom Swartz which has been in power in the CRC until now. The vote on the no-confidence motion showed that the combined opposition groups had a majority of 2 votes over Swartz' ruling Federal Party.

The Coloured Representative Council, offered to the Coloured people as a substitute for direct representation in the central South African Parliament which was abolished by the 1968 Separate Representation of Voters Amendment Act, was never representative of the Coloured people in any way. The Council consisted of 60 members – 40 elected and 20 nominated by the Government. Of the 40 elected seats, for which all Coloured men and women over 21 could vote, 28 were in the Cape, 6 in the Transvaal, and 3 each in Natal and the Free State.

In the first election held under the Act in September, 1969, six parties competed of which only one, the Labour Party, stood on an anti-apartheid platform. Nevertheless, the elections resulted in a defeat for the Government. In the first place, only 48.7 per cent of the Coloured voters bothered to register their votes at all. In the second place, the Labour Party emerged as the biggest party with 45.3 per cent of the votes cast and 26 of the 40 elected seats.

To secure control of the Council, however, the Labour Party had to win 31 of the total 60 seats, which it failed to do. But to make assurance doubly sure, the Government then proceeded to nominate Federal Party men to fill the remaining 20 seats on the Council,

including 13 candidates who had been defeated in the elections. This gave the Federal Party, which had won only 11 seats in the elections, the neccessary 31 votes to control the Council. To add insult to injury, the Government appointed Mr Tom Swartz himself as chairman of the Council executive, despite the fact that in the elections he had been heavily defeated by a Labour Party candidate, and got fewer votes even than the Republican Party candidate who came second in that constituency.

From the outset, the Coloured people never had confidence in the CRC, but Swartz hung grimly to his precarious majority and tried to present himself as the 'Prime Minister' of the Coloured people. However, much dirty water has flowed under the bridge since 1969. One insult and humiliation after another has been piled on the Coloured people. There have been repeated disturbances at the white-controlled Coloured schools and universities, resulting in clashes between the students and the police, and the closure of the university for a period in 1973. Tens of thousands of Coloured people have been driven from their homes and 're-settled' in Coloured ghettoes, resentment being especially bitter over the destruction of Cape Town's District Six.

Most of all, however, the Coloured people resented their relegation to the status of second-class citizens who could never aspire to any sort of freedom or self-determination in apartheid South Africa. Not only were they shut out of the central South African Parliament, but they were also denied the prospect, however spurious, offered to the Africans of independence in a Bantustan at some stage in the future. For the Coloureds there was to be neither equality in 'white' South Africa nor 'independence' in Colouredstan, only a limited form of self-rule in their municipal ghettoes.

Persistent Coloured opposition culminating in one of the biggest protest meetings ever seen in Cape Town when over 12,000 gathered at the Athlone stadium in July 1973, forced even the Nationalist Government to recognise that some new initiative was called for. A Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group was appointed to inquire into and report on the political, social and economic progress of the Coloured community since 1960, and 'hindrances in the different fields which can be identified as being obstacles' – though obstacles to what was not specified. The

commission was also asked 'to make recommendations as to the manner in which the development of the Coloured population group can be further promoted'.

In a bid to win support for the work of the Commission, the Government appointed six Coloureds to serve on it, but they were comfortably outnumbered by 12 whites plus the Commission chairman Professor Erika Theron of Stellenbosch. From the outset, the Labour Party decided to have nothing to do with the commission. It objected to the identification of 'Coloured' people as a separate population group for whom full citizenship rights were not contemplated.

The commission is expected to present its report either late this year or, more likely, next year, but irrespective of its findings, it is quite clear it will make no difference to the constitutional status of the Coloured people. In the very week in which the Labour Party's no-confidence motion was passed in the Coloured Representative Council last July, the Minister of the Interior, Dr Connie Mulder, told the 31st congress of the Nationalist Party in South West Africa that the Coloured people would never be represented directly or indirectly in Parliament while the Nationalist Party was in power. He professed he was amazed by 'agitation' designed to obtain representation for the Coloureds in Parliament.

'It is not the policy of the Nationalist Party', he said. 'Of course it is the right of the Coloured council to ask for it, but it is our right to say yes or no. In this case we say no'.

Following the adoption of his no-confidence motion in the CRC, Labour Party leader Mr Sonny Leon called for the immediate resignation of chairman Tom Swartz, who no longer had a majority on the Council. But Swartz refused to give way, and introduced a motion calling for the council to be adjourned until it could be prorogued. But he had lost his power to get his motion passed, and it looked inevitable that the amendment introduced by Mr Leon calling on the council to remain in session until it should decide otherwise would be passed. At this stage the Minister of Coloured Relations, Dr S.W. van der Merwe, stepped in. Because a state of stalemate had been reached in the CRC's deliberations, and on the advice of its chairman Mr Swartz, he said, he had decided to use his powers to prorogue the council forthwith. At the opening of the new Parliament in Cape Town at the beginning of August, the State President, Mr Fouche, announced that a

second general election for the Coloured Representative Council would be held after the completion of the second general registration of Coloured voters.

The 'stalemate' in the position of the Coloured people will thus continue. However, nothing can detract from the enormous victory which has been won by the Coloured people in exposing the fraud of the Coloured Representative Council. The Government's apartheid instrument has been totally discredited. No amount of future elections and future sessions of dummy bodies can make the Coloured people co-operate in their own enslavement. The time has come for the Coloured people to reinforce their links with the African and Indian people, their fellow sufferers under apartheid, and raise their joint fight for full and equal citizenship rights to a higher and more effective level.

NAMIBIA FIGHTS BACK

The internal organisation of SWAPO, encouraged both by its own successful boycott of the Ovamboland elections (see *The African Communist*, No 56, p17) and by the UN Security Council's decision to call a halt to the dialogue with Vorster despite intensive lobbying by the United States and the United Kingdom, held a special 3-day conference at Walvis Bay in the middle of December 1973. The main decisions taken, to escalate the campaign to force South Africa to quit Namibia and to strengthen the organisation of SWAPO, brought a swift and brutal response from Pretoria. Over 300 SWAPO supporters were arrested during January and February in an attempt to intimidate the people; public flogging in Ovamboland was renewed following an appeal in the courts by government attorneys, and ten SWAPO leaders, including David Meroro the national chairman, were detained in solitary confinement in early February under the Terrorism Act.

Such an outline can only give an impression of the brutality involved, since the total clampdown on press reports from Northern Namibia means that the South African police can act there with impunity. Prison conditions are such that when two of the detained SWAPO leaders appeared in court in June last they were not fit to plead. Meanwhile in Northern Namibia, at Omidamba, a concentration camp has been constructed for the mass detention of SWAPO sup-

porters and reports are now being received of a massacre of over 100 villagers in the Caprivi Strip in September, 1973.

Despite worldwide protests, the number of Namibian political prisoners grows. Hardest hit has been the militant SWAPO Youth League. Three of its leaders were sentenced to 8 years imprisonment last November, another to 6 years in March and in August the chairman and secretary received 5 years with three years suspended. David Meroro was remanded at the time of writing on a charge under the Suppression of Communism Act of possessing eight copies of *The African Communist.*

Such terrorising methods have not been Pretoria's only response to the SWAPO offensive. The white supremacists have been increasingly adept at using more sophisticated methods. Their main efforts have been designed to promote disunity within the black community and to discredit SWAPO. For example the local Nationalist Party has promoted a number of meetings with certain small black political groupings, usually tribal in character, as part of what is described as 'a process of dialogue'. Meanwhile the white press has been continuously distorting SWAPO statements and *The Windhoek Advertiser* went so far as to publish on its front page an obviously forged letter which was allegedly written by a SWAPO representative in 1971 in a most blatant attempt to undermine SWAPO's external missions.

But the offensive against SWAPO is only one aspect of the present strategies of the Vorster government towards Namibia. Its plans for defusing the liberation struggle by maintaining a dialogue with the UN having failed, it is now concentrating on consolidating its position within Namibia. This has required it to break not only the few undertakings that it made to the UN, but also the very terms of the original League of Nations mandate. This process of consolidating, it seems, has now been speeded up following the 25 April anti-fascist and democratic revolution in Portugal which has, by bringing closer the inevitable independence of Angola, increased the strategic importance to Pretoria of Namibia, especially in the North.

The most important feature of this consolidation was the announcement by Defence Minister Botha that the South African army is now operating in the Caprivi Strip, thus confirming the claims of SWAPO which had previously been vigorously denied. But the real meaning of this statement is that South Africa is now preparing a 1,500 mile anti-

guerilla zone along the length of the northern border of Namibia in a similar manner to that in N.E. Rhodesia. Signs that this attempt to halt the liberation struggle is facing difficulties are indicated by the news of the death of an army lieutenant and rumours of desertions to Botswana of young white conscripts.

Pretoria is also pursuing its policy of creating and sustaining its Bantustans in Namibia despite their obvious rejection by the people. The Ovamboland stooges have received special attention and were even recently invited to the first ever official multi-racial reception in Namibia.

TWO FACES OF BANTUSTAN

Many sections of the South African press, both pro- and anti-Government, have attempted to create the impression that the Bantustan leaders have a right to speak for their people, even though none of them have been placed in their positions as a result of free elections. In particular, the English press run to Chief Buthelezi to seek his opinion on every conceivable issue, apparently accepting his own explanations that, however much he may be restricted by the apartheid laws and the realities of power politics, he is at heart staunchly anti-apartheid, or at any rate anti-Nationalist.

Earlier this year an advertisement appeared in the British journal '*The Economist*' (May 11, 1974) which indicates that the Bantustan leaders, like the opportunists they are, show one face to South Africa and quite another to the outside world.

The advertisement took up two full pages of '*The Economist*'. One page contained four photographs – of Buthelezi (Chief Executive Councilor of Kwazulu), Matanzima (Transkei Chief Minister), Phatudi (Chief Minister of Lebowa) and Wessels Mota (Chief Executive Councillor of Basotho QuaQua).

On the opposite page the four Bantustan chiefs, appealing for foreign investment in the Bantustans, assure investors that their money will be quite safe.

'Some foreign investors in Africa', states the headline to their advertisement in huge letters, 'have had their capital investment nationalised and their profit repatriation blocked. We assure you

this will not happen if you invest in a black homeland in South Africa'.

There follow specific assurances by each of the four. Here is Buthelezi's total contribution:

'Make no mistake, we're not the only people you help when you start your factory in our country. First and foremost, you'll be helping yourself.

'To a cash grant to cover all your costs in moving your plant and personnel from one of the main industrial centres in South Africa.

'To free land and buildings for your industry (which you lease for as little as 4% of the value).

'To tax concessions, not only for your subsidiary in Kwazulu but also for your parent company elsewhere in South Africa. And there'll be an additional tax bonus of 25% on top of these tax concessions for any business that contacts us before 30th June.

'To a low-interest loan of up to 45% of the money you need for equipment and working capital.

'To as much as 30% off railage rates.

'And to problem-free labour resources.

'Then, after you've seen how much you can help yourself, give us a hand'.

Similar assurances and appeals come from the lips of the other three. Matanzima says investors need not fear nationalisation because 'South Africa has the most stable government on the African continent. And it is a capitalistic government dedicated to free enterprise'.

Phatudi, after pointing out as an inducement that Africans get lower wages and salaries in South Africa than workers in Europe, adds: 'We do not suffer from militant trade unions in South Africa. In short, the black proletariat in the black homelands is ready, willing and able to do a decent day's work for a fair salary'.

Wessels Mota says: 'If you want a nice, fat, highly profitable operation, invest in South Africa'.

Investors are asked to contact 'our representatives' at South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, London, or to write to the Bantu Investment Corporation, the all-white Government body headquarters in Pretoria.

Could anything be more shameful than the spectacle of Bantustan leaders offering the cheap labour of their starving peoples as bait for foreign capitalists, acting as the willing agents of the South African

Government abroad, apologists for the Bantustan policies which they claim before their own people to oppose?

In this period of decolonisation, what can one say of the Bantustan stooges who plead to be exploited by foreigners in South Africa's colonial backyard? Who boast that African labour is sweated and docile and that there are no African trade unions?

We challenge Buthelezi, or any of his colleagues, to stand up and repeat these shameful appeals in front of their own people, who would be purple with rage if they knew what their 'representatives' were doing behind their backs.

While tens of thousands of Kwazulu workers, as well as workers of all other African groups, are striking in every province of South Africa for higher wages and better conditions, bravely facing police terror in their struggle to live, Buthelezi and his Bantustan colleagues are stabbing them in the back by trying to tighten the shackles of capitalism round their wrists at the instance of the South African Government.

They will have to answer to their people one day. In the meantime, foreign investors should head the warning that has been issued by the true representatives of the African people, the African National Congress, that when liberation comes to South Africa, all foreigners who have tried to profit from apartheid slave labour will be ex-propriated without compensation.

The resources of South Africa, both material and human, belong to its people, not to the white supremacist robbers and their foreign collaborators.

Footnote: Speaking at a passing-out parade of 222 African warders in Pretoria last June, the Minister of Police and Prisons, Mr J.T.Kruger, said it was not so easy to grant independence to the 'homelands'. He said: 'The major problem was whether they could cope with the administration involved . . . At present there were prisons in only a few homelands, but prisons would have to be provided in all'. (*'Rand Daily Mail'*, June 22. 1974.)

THE SPIRIT OF RIVONIA

When in May 1964 Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and the other Rivonia trialists stood in the dock to hear the sentence of the racist court, they stood there as representatives of the whole liberation

struggle in South Africa. And the world paid tribute to them as such, even while their unjust sentences were being meted out and the prison doors closed behind them – 'for life'.

These comrades and patriots, with all other political prisoners in our country, are the true sons of our soil. They are close to the hearts of all the oppressed people, and their names will live forever. They stand for the inevitable future of our country – for the freedom, equality and unity of the liberated South Africa whose outline is sketched in the programme of the ANC and the Congress movement, the Freedom Charter. The demand for their release is one of the most widely supported demands in South Africa and overseas. And just as in the past few weeks, similar political prisoners – leaders and followers, Communists and non-communists, democrats and liberals, Christians and non-Christians – have come streaming out of the fascist prisons of Portugal, Angola, Mozambique and Greece, so it is certain that their South African brothers and sisters will pour out of Robben Island, Pretoria Local, and the other hell-holes, to play their part in building a new society.

Because these heroes of the people's struggle represent the best in our society, and an alternative vision of its destiny, it was appropriate that some democratically-minded students should campaign in May this year for their release, taking the tenth anniversary of the Rivonia trial as an opportunity to remind white South Africa of the men and women it has locked away and tried to forget. Predictably, they got precious little support from the white public, although a few Progressive Party and even one or two United Party figures joined in half-heartedly – the election safely behind them.

African, Indian and Coloured leaders (the free ones, that is) lent support to the campaign, which coincided with an international drive to free SA political prisoners, spearheaded by the UN General Assembly which issued a special appeal. The only sour note was struck by Dr Phatudi, the so-called Chief Minister of Lebowa. Speaking at the invitation of the Wits students, he sought to drive a wedge between some political prisoners and others. The communists, he declared, should not be released, only those who were 'democratically oriented'. It was the democratically oriented students who hissed these divisive remarks and afterwards rebuked him publicly for them. No doubt the obscure Dr Phatudi, now a 'leader' of the African people because the

Bantu Administration Department has bestowed his present position upon nim, sought to please his Pretoria masters by displaying his anti-Communism, while currying favour with the masses by calling for the release of some of their leaders. Mr Lennox Sebe, another 'leader' (this time of the Ciskei) displayed his qualities of leadership by proclaiming that there were other more important things to do than release political prisoners – like developing the Bantu Homelands. Other 'leaders', whose status would collapse like a pricked balloon if the Robben Island prisoners were suddenly released and enabled to return to open political activity, kept silent about the whole campaign.

DEMOCRATIC UNITY

We have mentioned some of the things for which the Rivonia trialists stood. They personified other things which are even more relevant today than then. First, they exemplified the unity of the democratic forces in South Africa which is *the essential condition to their success.* They stood in the dock, six Africans, an Indian and two whites, without a thought for their different racial backgrounds, utterly bound to each other and to the masses by the common urge to smash apartheid and build a democratic state. All the accounts tell us that the same unity in struggle still binds the men together on Robben Island, be they African, Indian or Coloured. Any movement that foresakes those ideals, that turns its back on the hard-won unity of all democratic forces, guarantees its own failure and will betray the people.

Secondly, the Rivonia trialists, like so many others who were dragged through the courts in the dark days of 1963/64, demonstrated in practice, for all the world to see, the unity of Communists and non-Communists in the freedom struggle. Well-known Communists like Ahmed Kathrada and Govan Mbeki were there in the dock to hear Nelson Mandela pay his now famous tribute:

> 'It is perhaps difficult for white South Africans, with an ingrained prejudice against communism, to understand why experienced African politicians so readily accept communists as their friends. But to us the reason is obvious. Theoretical differences amongst those fighting against oppression is a luxury we cannot afford at this stage. What is more, for many

> decades communists were the only political group in South Africa who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings and their equals . . . (to) talk with us, live with us, and work with us . . .
>
> 'It is not only in internal politics that we count communists as amongst those who support our cause. In the international field, communist countries have always come to our aid . . .'

In the modern world, in which Communism is the most revolutionary force, and the most implacable foe of all forms of racism and imperialism, revolutionism and anti-Communism are incompatible. The working class, as the only class in society entirely divorced from the means of production, is the only class with no property stake in the present unjust and oppressive order; it is therefore, as Lenin showed, the most consistently revolutionary class of capitalist society.

In South Africa – where the overwhelming majority of the population enjoys no democratic rights at all and suffers from the worst form of racial oppression and super-exploitation under a white minority regime – the working class is also the most consistent fighter for democracy. Here the Communist Party, guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, makes an important contribution to the broad alliance of democratic forces headed by the African National Congress.

It was because they recognised and acted upon the principle of the necessity for unity of all democratic forces, communist and non-communist, both inside South Africa and on the international front, that the Rivonia men expressed another and essential feature of our liberation movement. In calling for their immediate release, let us recapture the spirit of the men of Rivonia. We owe it to them and to the people to do no less.

An outstanding Revolutionary

ORATION BY Y.M. DADOO, CHAIRMAN OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY AT THE FUNERAL OF MICHAEL HARMEL IN PRAGUE, 24 JUNE 1974

We have come together to pay homage to comrade Michael Harmel, an outstanding South African revolutionary whose whole life was unconditionally and totally dedicated to the struggle of the people and who devoted all his adult years to the cause which was dear to him above all others: the cause of liberation, socialism and internationalism.

Comrade Harmel was a man whom nature had endowed with considerable talents as a thinker, writer and publicist. He used these gifts unselfishly to enrich a movement and a struggle towards whose growth and development he made a lasting contribution.

Born in Johannesburg on the 15th February 1915, the son of an Irish Socialist immigrant, he became attracted to Marxism in his student days. He joined our Party in 1939 and for the rest of his life the Party was his Master. He served it with discipline and loyalty as a full-time revolutionary until his untimely death on the 18th June 1974.

Within a short time of joining our Party his obvious talents and leadership calibre were recognised. He was soon elected to the

Johannesburg District Committee which he served as its secretary until 1943 when he was transferred to Cape Town as a member of the National Executive of the Central Committee. On his return to Johannesburg an increasing measure of his time was taken up with journalism as correspondent for the *Guardian* and as a member of the editorial board of the Party's official newspaper, *Inkululeko.*

When our Party was driven underground in 1950, comrade Harmel's courage and loyalty to our cause did not flinch. He found himself amongst the group of comrades who set about the task of rebuilding our Party in the new conditions of illegality. It was during this decade of the 50's that the mass struggle of our people reached stirring new peaks in the Defiance Campaign, the Congress of the People, nation-wide general political strikes and many other mass actions. Our Party is proud of the leading role it played in the mass upsurge and those of us who worked with him will remember comrade Harmel's participation as a member of the new underground Party collective.

During this period comrade Harmel made a valuable contribution both as a publicist and as a participant in the process of internal policy formulation. He played an important and leading role in the sub-committee which prepared the original draft of our Party's new programme, 'The Road to South African Freedom', which was finally adopted at our underground conference in 1962. This programme added a new dimension to our theoretical approach, particularly in its new elaboration of the concept of Colonialism of a Special Type which characterises the South African class and social structure.

To mark the 50th anniversary of our Party in 1971, comrade Harmel was charged by the Central Committee with the task of preparing a short history of our Party 'Fifty Fighting Years' which was published under one of the pseudonyms he used in illegal conditions – A. Lerumo.

The most lasting monument to comrade Harmel's role as a Party writer and publicist is the 'African Communist' which he helped to launch in 1959 and which he edited continuously until a year before his death when he was appointed the Central Committee's representative on the 'World Marxist Review' in Prague. Under his editorship the 'African Communist' established itself as an internationally recognised organ of Marxist-Leninist thought in Africa. Its pages contain a rich storehouse of Marxist analysis of problems relating to the African revolution in general and the South African revolution in particular.

Comrade Harmel was a familiar figure at international gatherings of the world Communist movement where, representing our Party, he worked tirelessly for the implementation of our policy on the unity of the international Communist movement as a fundamental element in the struggle against reaction, imperialism, colonialism, racialism and social injustice. He never wavered from his unbending conviction that the socialist world and its strongest and most experienced bastion – the Soviet Union led by the Party of Lenin – constituted the impregnable fortress of the world forces of peace, national independence, socialism and social progress. As a dedicated internationalist he saw anti-sovietism as a deadly weapon of the most reactionary circles; a weapon which imperialism, and its ally Zionism, use in their frenzied efforts to undermine and disrupt the underlying unity of national liberation movements and the Socialist countries – a unity which in comrade Harmel's most recent words at the Baghdad conference 'is a historical necessity for our common victory over imperialism'.

Since he is being laid to rest in the soil of the Czechoslovak Socialist state, it is also fitting to record that comrade Harmel was steadfast in his support of the Czechoslovak Party and people during the difficult 1968 events.

On behalf of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, we dip our red banner in honour of a life well spent in the service of freedom and socialism. Comrade Harmel was on duty when he left us. Those of us who remain on duty have gained immeasurably by having worked with a comrade whose contribution to our struggle will forever be inscribed in the history of our country, South Africa. In the difficult and arduous days which lie ahead, we will find added inspiration, comrade Mick, by your example of total dedication to the cause of Communism and freedom of all peoples.

HAMBA KAHLE, COMRADE HARMEL! MAYIBUYE iAFRIKA!
AMANDLA NGAWETHU!
LONG LIVE THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY!
LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT!

The Central Committee of the South African Communist Party acknowledges receipt of messages of condolence on the death of Michael Harmel from Communist Parties of socialist and other coun-

tries, national liberation and anti-apartheid movements, peace and progressive organisations and individuals in many parts of the world, among them:

Moses Kotane, General Secretary SACP: 'The shocking news of the untimely death of Comrade Harmel has deprived our organisation of one of its ablest and active members. We are the poorer to lose him.'

National Executive Committee of the African National Congress: 'All members of the Congress deeply mourn . . . His death robs the entire national liberation and progressive movement of South Africa and the international anti-imperialist forces of an indomitable fighter.'

Secretariat of the Revolutionary Council: 'His spirit and dedication continue to inspire us all'.

Similar messages were received from ANC offices in Dar es Salaam, Stockholm and other centres.

Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union: 'He was a convinced internationalist, loyal to the cause of the South African Communist Party and the world fraternity of Communists. His memory will remain with us forever.' Also from Dr Solodovnikov, director of the African Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences and from the editorial Board of *World Marxist Review.*

The Cold War has failed

Michael Harmel's last speech, delivered in Prague at a conference organised by World Marxist Review *on the competition of the capitalist and socialist systems.*

It is a competition of a different sort to the traditional economic rivalry between capitalist countries – a rivalry for markets, raw materials, spheres of influence, expressing the conflicting aims of the capitalist class in each country, and implemented by trade wars, dumping, diplomatic and even military conflicts. In this inter-imperialist and inter-capitalist competition, gain for one side is sought in the ruination of the other. Dog eats dog.

By contrast the competition between socialist and capitalist countries is a historic process in which the socialist world system demonstrates increasingly its economic, political, cultural and moral superiority over the rival system. Marxist-Leninists have always firmly rejected the adventurist and harmful concept 'the worse the better' advanced by Trotskyites, anarchists, Maoists and other petit-bourgeois ultra-leftists. The logic of such a concept leads inevitably towards advocacy of international war as a means of precipitating social revolution.

In turning our backs on this concept we have raised the standard of peaceful coexistence. And the logic of our concept leads to the need for fruitful forms of economic cooperation between countries of the socialist and capitalist systems.

For the first fifty years of the existence of socialism, the main trend of bourgeois policy was to try to destroy it, by armed intervention against the Soviet Union, and by organising an economic, diplomatic and political blockade – a 'cordon sanitaire', a 'cold war'. This policy now lies in ruins. After fifty years it has become perfectly plain that it has utterly failed to hold back the advance of socialism. That is why the most important and realistic imperialist spokesmen have been compelled to come face to face with reality.

ILLUSIONS

Of course we still hear voices, in the USA and Britain, which reflect the illusions of the cold war period. They cling obstinately to remains of anti-Soviet discrimination, talk about extending trade and other relations with the Soviet Union, of agreeing to all-European security measures only 'on condition' that the socialist system should change its internal policies in accordance with the ideas of bourgeois liberalism.

But these voices arise from a fundamental misconception: that cooperation is only to the benefit of the socialist countries, and that it is being extended to them kindly by the imperialists as a sort of favour and an act of charity.

Of course, genuine cooperation must be mutually advantageous. But in fact the truth is that the ailing capitalist economies are in fact more in need of a helping hand at the present stage.

We don't want to return to that period, but we can point out it was the Socialist Soviet Union which showed its ability successfully to survive years of blockade and isolation and to flourish economically. Any attempt to renew such tactics would no doubt affect socialist economic progress, but it would have infinitely more serious consequences for the capitalist countries.

It will be hoped, no doubt, by the monopoly bourgeoisie, that through extending economic cooperation with the socialist countries they will gain a new lease of life for the tottering capitalist system.

These hopes are not likely to be realised. The future of capitalism will be determined, as we know, by the struggle and the relative strength of the two main classes and their allies. Better understanding of the truth about socialist societies, which must flow from ever-increasing knowledge and contact which cooperation will bring, can only raise the class consciousness of workers exploited by capitalism, and their determination and ability to win socialism themselves.

INTENSIFY THE BOYCOTT

We are speaking of the general theme of the advantages of growing cooperation for the upholders of socialism, peace and national freedom. The truth of this general proposition, however, by no means implies that the anti-imperialist forces should relax boycotts of the apartheid Republic of South Africa. World opinion has long demanded that imperialism should cut off this detestable regime from the financial, military and political support which have enabled it to survive. On the contrary, as the African revolution moves rapidly to the very borders of the country, the boycott campaign should be intensified and made fully effective.

PORTUGAL & AFRICA: breaking the chains

by Alexander Sibeko

'We are showing Africans it is possible to transform one's life; it is possible to fight the great colonialist-imperialist powers in our continent. Our struggle is part of the making of African history'.

AMILCAR CABRAL

The historic turn of events with regard to Portugal and Africa caught many unawares – not least dictatorial regimes from Spain to Southern Africa. For them the distinct tolling of a death knell could be heard! An apparently permanent and invincible dictatorship had collapsed; custodian of an atrocious colonial system that had endured for centuries and seemingly defied serious change.

But the overthrow of the Salazar-Caetano government on 25 April this year was not a bolt from the blue.

To those with an unshakeable conviction not only in the justness of a cause, but in the knowledge that the oppressed masses – organised and united under effective leadership – have the strength and potential to overthrow their oppressors and change their lives, the events of 25

April and the subsequent developments leading to Portugal's historic announcement at the end of July that it recognised the right of its colonies to independence, are a vindication of the process of mass struggle and heroic sacrifice.

The concept that the basis of liberation is the united struggle of the broad masses, together with revolutionary leadership and a correct political line, has been firmly grasped by the national liberation movements of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique: the Peoples' Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO).

In its founding manifesto, in 1956, the MPLA declared:

> 'Portuguese colonialism will not fall without a fight, and this is why Angola's people can liberate themselves only by revolutionary struggle. This struggle can be won only by a united front of all Angola's anti-imperialist forces, irrespective of their colour, social situation, religious beliefs or individual preferences: it can be won only by a great movement of liberation.'

Expressing the outlook of the armed struggle that took root and grew in all three territories, Amilcar Cabral, one of Africa's most outstanding revolutionary sons and leader of the PAIGC until his tragic assassination by Portuguese agents in January 1973, wrote:

> 'Guerilla struggle means mass participation. Without mass participation guerilla struggle would be impossible.'[1]

The phenomenal success of the guerilla movements in Portugal's African colonies lies in the cardinal factor of the mobilisation and active participation of the people themselves in the fight for their own liberation. Portugal's efforts to destroy the armed freedom fighters failed because of the support they received from the people. FRELIMO President, Samora Machel, on the opening of a new front in July 1974, in the Zambezia province of Mozambique, put it this way:

> 'Because they were grasped by a determined people and guided by FRELIMO's correct line, our weapons liberated the land and liberated the people . . . Because ours is a popular struggle, because it is just, because we were able to define our target correctly, the national liberation struggle of the Mozambican people and the brother peoples of Angola and Guinea-Bissau,

brought about the fall of fascism in Portugal. This is a victory of our solidarity with the Portuguese people, our consistent allies in the struggle against colonialism and fascism.'

WHO IS THE ENEMY?

The MPLA, PAIGC and FRELIMO leadership understood the relationship between the exploitation of their people and the exploitation of the masses in Portugal. The correct definition of who was the enemy had always been an essential point of principle, and they all asserted that the enemy was not the Portuguese people, 'themselves victims of fascism', but the Portuguese colonial system.

'To be aware' of the social, economic and political degeneration of Portuguese society, stated Amilcar Cabral, 'is of primary importance in the outline of the perspectives of our struggle'. In striking contrast to the Portuguese Defence Minister who declared to troops embarking for Angola in 1961 that 'they were not going to fight against human beings but savages and wild beasts', . . . the hand of friendship was continually held out by the MPLA, PAIGC and FRELIMO to the Portuguese people and indeed to the non-hostile section of the Portuguese community in Africa. In July 1972, FRELIMO declared: 'On starting the struggle in Manica e Sofala where an important section of the Portuguese community in our country is established, we reaffirm that our struggle is not against them, that our victory can only benefit those who live from honest labour, those who suffer from colonial and fascist exploitation. The Mozambican people fraternally call upon the Portuguese soldiers, the Portuguese people to join the common effort of liberation.'[2]

The process that began in the Portuguese colonies as a struggle to kick out the Portuguese colonialists deepened into anti-imperialist struggle as the nature of the enemy became more clearly defined. On the dialectical nature of the growth of this awareness Marcelino dos Santos, FRELIMO Vice President, has explained:

> 'At the beginning in FRELIMO the general aim was to fight colonialism and to many colonialism just means white people. But with the unfolding of the struggle it became clearer that colonialists were not such simple entities. When we faced

> colonialism in real struggle, we faced the army, the police, the administration; these were the expressions of colonialism. And after that we could go further and say: "Ah, but these are just instruments of something else – of economic interests." . . . So at each stage and as the struggle progressed one should be able to give greater clarity to the main aim, to define the enemy more scientifically, to define the liberation forces with greater precision – in other words to develop one's ideology, and a more advanced political line.'[3]

AN AGENT OF IMPERIALISM

As the liberation wars progressed, the freedom forces asked themselves how it was that Portugal, the most backward and poverty stricken country of Europe, was able to carry on its criminal struggle in three widely dispersed African territories, a struggle that was tying down 200,000 Portuguese troops and accounting for almost 50% of her national budget! As Cabral has pointed out, the backward Portuguese economy could not even provide toy guns for children, let alone modern machines of war.[4] If the Western Powers really disapproved of Portugal's colonial policies why did they persist in providing her with all the NATO arms she required in order to continue fighting and bombing the African inhabitants of her colonies?

It began to dawn on the people that in reality Portugal's role was that of an agent of foreign imperialism; that Portugal, whilst nominally a colonial power, was in essence itself a semi-colony of imperialism. Portugal guaranteed for the imperialist powers, Britain ('the oldest ally'), America, France, West Germany, Japan etc. – and more recently South Africa – the joint exploitation of the vast wealth and resources of her African Empire. Interlocked with this was the strategic position of Portugal and her colonies in relation to the tremendous riches and resources of Southern Africa. For this reason the imperialists backed Portugal to the hilt!

Thus it was the powerful foreign imperialist interests in the Portuguese colonies, the dominant economic force, which were the root of the colonial problem. The cruel and bloody wars – 13 years in Angola, 11 years in Guinea-Bissau and 10 years in Mozambique –

were being waged for the sole benefit of the foreign imperialists and a minority of Portuguese monopolists!

The character of this imperialist domination and exploitation, of which the Portuguese economy itself was a prisoner, reflected and generated the common struggle of the Portuguese and African people against the big imperialist monopolies who wax rich on the joint exploitation of both people.

> 'One of the principal strengths, if not the main one, of the Portuguese colonialists, is the political and material support of their allies', Amilcar Cabral has stated. 'We must learn the lessons of this fact, as much for the present as for the future, and consolidate friendship and solidarity with all anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist forces. We must strengthen our links with Africans and non-Africans who, in helping us in our difficult struggle, have given us real proof of their friendship'.[5]

WEAK LINK IN THE CHAIN

In his classic analysis of imperialism and the development of the theory of socialist revolution, Lenin, writing almost sixty years ago, observed that the increased national oppression created by imperialism resulted in growing resistance and struggle on the part of the masses. Among the propositions Lenin advanced was that the national liberation movement against imperialism weakens and undermines it, thereby facilitating its overthrow by the workers of the more advanced countries. At the same time, the workers' revolutionary struggle makes for the success of the national liberation struggle of the oppressed nations. It was because of the decisive historical significance he attached to the co-operation and solidarity of the working class and national liberation movements, that Lenin supplemented the internationalist slogan of Marx and Engels by the declamation: 'Workers of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite!'[6]

Lenin characterised imperialism as the 'eve of the proletarian revolution' because it intensified all the contradictions of capitalism – that between the workers and capitalists, between the colonial peoples and the imperialist powers, between the rival powers themselves – thus opening up the possibilities for its overthrow.

The collapse of Portuguese fascism and colonialism is a clear manifestation of this general and sharpening crisis of capitalism. Once again the imperialist chain breaks at its weakest link! Agostinho Neto, President of MPLA, proclaimed in February this year: 'Portugal is the weakest link in the whole chain established for the domination of the peoples'.

POVERTY AND STRUGGLE IN PORTUGAL

All the contradictions of imperialism that we have been considering had been intensifying in Portugal; eroding and undermining the basis of power and control of its ruling class.

The cost of the ruinous colonial wars, in money and manpower, was placing an intolerable burden on the Portuguese economy and social life. Only the interests of a handful of exploiters and their minions were being served. The wars brought only misery and suffering to the Portuguese people, the cost of which they had to carry on their backs. The concentration of capital in Portugal is extreme. The notorious '200 families' – big landowners and monopolists – possess practically all the capital; own 40% of the land; have been the country's traditional rulers.[7] The fascist state apparatus was the faithful servant of this oligarchy, and continued the domination and exploitation of the colonies in its interests.

The Portuguese people are the poorest in Europe. The working-class slums of the cities, and living conditions of the peasantry, are reminiscent of the worst shanty towns of South Africa, Luanda and Lourenco Marques. Under the dictatorship there was a complete lack of political and trade union rights; strikes were illegal. Whatever wage increases industrial labourers won were more than wiped out by inflation, which was 13.6% in 1973, and was becoming worse under the impact of the wars. An acute turning point was reached in October 1973 with the Arab oil boycott. Lisbon prices shot up at least 20%; the cost of food 30%.

Against this system of extreme exploitation and misery the working class stubbornly fought back, courageously led for fifty years by the underground Communist Party. Organising wherever the masses were, Party cells extended to within the armed forces. The activity of the

Party, its organising ability, its inseparable link with the masses, and its uncontested vanguard position as leader of the working class, were key elements in the situation leading up to the 25 April uprising.

EFFECT OF THE WAR

'War', as Lenin observed, 'acts as a powerful stage manager of revolution'; the process was biting deeply into the Portuguese people in general, and the armed forces in particular.

The failure of the colonial wars magnified contradictions within Portugal's mass conscript army. The young soldiers – mainly workers, peasants and students (the last made up the junior ranks and had experienced an early taste of radical politics and police batons in the universities) – had no interest in fighting and dying in Africa for a regime they loathed, and against a people they grew to admire and recognise as suffering from the same exploiters as themselves. The principled position of the liberation movements that had accurately defined the enemy as Portuguese colonialism, and not the Portuguese soldiers and people, was bearing fruit. FRELIMO, in its assessment of the causes of the 25 April events, explained: '. . . an important section of the Portuguese army itself was made to understand that it was not defending the interests of its people in the colonial war when it felt the growing disaffection of Portuguese opinion with regard to the war it is waging in the colonies.'[8]

Secretly, from within the army, a movement of disaffected junior officers and lower ranks began to grow and assert itself; this was the first stirrings of what came to be called the Armed Forces Movement (MFA).

Faced with this increasingly desperate situation – wars they could not win; an army that would not fight; working class resistance; the struggle of the colonial people – the Portuguese ruling class found itself caught in a tangle of insoluble contradictions. The most important challenge of all was the spectacular intensification of the guerilla struggles, which had become peoples' wars of liberation in the fullest sense.

On 24 September 1973 the people of Guinea-Bissau declared their country independent, and soon received the recognition of nearly 90 countries. Two-thirds of the country was already liberated, with 55,000

Portuguese troops confined to a few towns and bases. Half a million square kilometres of Angola, with a population of nearly one million, had been liberated by the MPLA, tying-down over 60,000 troops. An additional 10,000 troops had to be hastily transferred from Angola to Mozambique in a desperate effort to stem the rising tide of FRELIMO attacks there. Having liberated the Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces in the remote north during the period from 1964 to 1968, FRELIMO forces struck roots in Tete province on the Zambia-Zimbabwe borders by 1970; and in July 1972 successfully launched the armed struggle in Manica e Sofala province, an economic and strategic nerve centre of the country, which threatened to cut Mozambique in half.

Strategic road and rail communications between Mozambique, Rhodesia and Malawi were under constant attack, and army convoys had to run the gauntlet of mines and ambushes as they attempted to escort supplies to the Cabora Bassa dam site in Tete. By July 1974, FRELIMO was enjoying such ease of operation, owing to the complete collapse of army opposition, that it was capable of rapid success in the opening of its fifth front, in Zambezia; the central province linking the north and the south of the country, and the hub of communications between the western zone and the sea. Portuguese troops which numbered over 70,000 in Mozambique were refusing to fight; black soldiers were deserting to FRELIMO; the railway to Tete was blasted at 75 places on 10 July, and blasted 74 times on 20 July 1974. Perhaps the most spectacular and far-reaching success in the military sphere was the new ability of the liberation movements in all three territories to neutralise Portuguese air power. Using highly effective and portable anti-aircraft missiles, supplied by the Soviet Union, they demonstrated their ability to secure and defend liberated zones from air attack. Numerous Portuguese aeroplanes began to fall in flames from the African skies.

Hostility between the army and the white settlers in Angola (600,000 in a population of 5.6 million) and Mozambique (220,000 out of 8.2 million) had become a serious factor as well. The most racist of the settlers blamed the soldiers for 'cowardice and incompetence' in failing to suppress the guerillas. The nadir of army-settler relations was reached in January 1974 when a mob of rabid ultras besieged the officers' mess in Beira.

The intensification of the armed struggle well before April 1974 had caused a complete collapse in army morale in all three territories. The effect of the deteriorating situation was transmitted to the troops in Portugal; who were either waiting to be shipped out to the colonies or had survived a spell of 'duty' abroad. The armed forces were verging on mutiny.

RULING CLASS SPLIT

Faced with the situation where it felt control slipping from its grasp, deep divisions began to appear within the ranks of the ruling class on the question of how best to hang on to power. The divisions were between the land-owning bourgeoisie who traditionally held the reins of power in politics and the army on the one hand, and the rising industrial bourgeoisie on the other hand. The former had been faithfully served by Salazar and generals like Kaulza de Arriaga, who had been commander of the army in Mozambique. This group refused to consider even the slightest concessions and believed in a formula of greater repressions; if necessary genocide such as that perpetrated on African villagers at Wiriyamu and elsewhere. The mentality of this group is common to most Southern African racists. With a singular inability to learn from his total failure in Mozambique, de Arriaga has written: 'Subversion is a war above all of intelligence. One needs to have superior intelligence to carry on subversion; not everyone is capable of doing it. Now blacks are not highly intelligent, on the contrary, of all the peoples in the world they are the least intelligent.' True to the form of his species he fervently believed that: 'It is in Africa that communism must be defeated'.

The industrial capitalist group were more pragmatic, and in the army were represented by the likes of Spinola who had been with Franco during the Spanish civil war, the Nazis at Stalingrad, and finally commander-in-chief of Portuguese forces in Guinea-Bissau; where he earned his 'blood and smiles' epithet. His experiences in Africa had taught him that the war in the colonies could not be won. He sought to give Portugal 'the possibility of controlling events' through reform. In his book *Portugal and the Future*, considered a heresy by the colonial 'diehards', Spinola wrote: 'To try to win a war of subversion through

a military solution is to accept defeat in advance, unless one possesses unlimited capability to prolong the war indefinitely, turning it into an institution.'

Whilst they differed on tactics both sections of the ruling class were united on the need to perpetuate the system of exploitation. The essential factor about the widening differences within the Portuguese ruling class was that it was accentuated by the struggle of the national liberation movements, and the Portuguese masses. The Portuguese ruling class became incapable of resolving the growing crisis. There could be no solution until the Portuguese popular forces could break the suffocating grip of reaction at home. The only way the crisis could be resolved was through the revolutionary process.

THE REGIME TOPPLES

By 25 April the situation had matured to the point where the Armed Forces Movement was ready to strike. The outstanding success of this action was the fact that the armed forces were supported by the overwhelming majority of Portuguese people and their leading organisations. Millions of people rejoiced in the streets, citizens and soldiers exchanged embraces; political prisoners streamed out of the notorious jails and the hated secret police were locked up in the cells they had vacated.

An outstanding feature of the situation was the obvious fact that the Communist Party of Portugal had emerged from illegality as the most powerful and best organised party, and that it enjoyed the greatest prestige and support not only among the working class, but among the broad, anti-fascist forces.

Explaining the success of 25 April, CP leader Alvaro Cunhal later stated:

> 'The revolt was not a coup by a military clan . . . With all its contradictory characteristics, unique and original, the Movement of the Armed Forces and the events of the last few days are part of the process of the Portuguese democratic revolution.'[9]

The uprising, Cunhal declared, was the culmination of a lengthy process conditioned by factors such as the crisis of the fascist regime,

the innumerable consequences of the colonial war, 'and the success of the liberation movements in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, as well as the widescale struggle of the Portuguese people.'

IMMEDIATE TASKS

Although composed of many diverse elements, divided and uncertain on numerous issues, the Armed Forces Movement was united around a programme of basic democratic demands, and above all the issue of ending the colonial wars. A Provisional Government was formed with the task of carrying out this programme and preparing for democratic elections within a year. With an air of uncertainty over its first major step into the political arena, the Movement sought a respectable leader to unite the wavering sections of the armed forces, and thus invited Spinola to head the Junta of National Salvation and become President of the Provisional Government.

The Portuguese democratic forces, including the Communist Party, support the programme of the Movement of the Armed Forces, because it is aimed at solving the most immediate problems confronting the people. The Portuguese Communist Party sees this historic task as liquidating fascism and colonialism, creating democratic institutions, and developing the economy in an anti-monopoly direction. The task is a complex one, and as Alvaro Cunhal said at the outset: 'The popular movement is on the upsurge but difficulties caused by the vestiges of the Salazar corporative state remain.'

The party sees as an indispensable condition for success the firm unity of the armed forces and the mass democratic movement of the Portuguese people. Revolutions do not happen in a 'pure' form, and communists must enter alliances and coalitions in order to present the viewpoint of the working class, and convince all democratic forces that their self-interests are best served by such policies.

The mandate of the Provisional Government, handed to it by the Armed Forces Movement, has as its objective: 'the leading of Portugal towards a regime freely chosen by the people.' The Party accepts representation within the government in order to fight to implement this directive.

The general outburst of enthusiasm from almost all sections of Portuguese society in the heady days following Caetano's overthrow, soon developed into a political reality in which the signs of the class struggle became more apparent. As Caetano was being swept from the scene of history he had stated to Spinola: 'General, I surrender to you the government. You must take care, because you must keep control. I am frightened by the idea of the power loose in the streets.' The bourgeoisie and imperialists pin their hopes on Spinola. It was expected that he would apply the brakes on the forces that were unleashed with the toppling of the old order, both in Portugal and in Africa; that he would 'buy time' and build up the centrist and neo-colonial forces as a new basis of power.

SOUTH AFRICA LOOKS TO SPINOLA

The drama being played out in Lisbon was viewed with exceptional alarm by Pretoria. Shaken by events to their very marrow and fearful of the obvious consequences – the collapse of a crucial prop in their unholy alliance; the loss of the protective presence of Portugal in the buffer states; the prospect of the enemy on their own borders – the racists of South Africa and their Rhodesian ally are confronted by the most far-reaching challenge in their history. Almost overnight their strategy of containing the forward surge of African liberation was in ruins. To them the position of Spinola was fundamental.

The Johannesburg *Financial Mail*, spokesman of big business, sought reassurance in what it termed, on 3 May, 'The Portuguese Puzzle'. Quoting from *Portugal and the Future*, it observed that 'Spinola is in reality . . . the opposite of a man who intends an African surrender.' Vorster and Smith were soon in a huddle in Pretoria, discussing 'matters of mutual concern'. Claiming that they were not concerned about 'the possibility of a black government in Mozambique', they averred that all would be well as long as such a government was 'good' and 'stable'. Whilst their low-key profile was designed to calm their people and give the impression of taking it all in their stride, they were clearly conscious that everything depended on 'good' and 'stable' government emerging in Lisbon.

The diverse forces and interest groups within the Provisional Government and the Armed Forces Movement meant that from the outset, both with regard to democratisation in Portugal and decolonisation in Africa, there was no clear consensus; this applied particularly to the question of how and when independence could be achieved in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

The Provisional Government rapidly sought contact with the national liberation movements which the fascist regime and the imperialists had previously characterised as 'terrorists'. The liberation movements – MPLA, PAIGC and FRELIMO – had always made it clear that they would be willing to negotiate with Portugal; but only on a basis of principle – and that was Portugal's recognition of their right to complete and total independence.

Spinola's initial pledge, on his inauguration in mid-May as Portugal's provisional president, that the future of Africa would be 'democratically decided by all those who lay claim to those lands', was ambiguous to say the least. It hinted at an intention to follow a neo-colonial policy; a slow time-table of stages, with vague references to 'constitutional talks', 'autonomy' and 'referendums' aimed at disarming the people; a process the emerging African states had been faced with in the 'sixties. Each day gained by such a process provides imperialism with opportunities to sow divisions, create new obstacles for the independence movements, seek out elements who are prepared to collaborate. But the situation in Africa today is very different from that of a decade ago. The Portuguese are dealing with a determined and united people, organised and led by experienced liberation movements, dedicated to continuing the struggle until real and meaningful independence is achieved. Spinola's initial overtures were thrown back in his face when it became clear that all he was offering was a 'cease-fire' and the promise of some form of 'referendum' at a later date. That the Portuguese offer was not in keeping with the new realities was underlined by Samora Machel's classic rebuff:

> 'One does not ask a slave whether he wants to be free, especially after he has rebelled, and still less if one is a slave owner'.[10]

'If a referendum was valid before our people took up arms', Machel declaimed to the OAU summit conference at Mogadishu in June, 'it lost all meaning the day armed struggles were launched in Angola, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and in Mozambique.'[11]

Displaying firm unity and solidarity the brother organisations of MPLA, PAIGC and FRELIMO resolved to continue the armed struggle until Portugal recognised them as the legitimate representatives of their people, and affirmed the right of the people of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde and Mozambique 'to total and complete independence in the whole of their territories.' The only question there could be negotiations on, the movements made clear, 'was the orderly transfer of power into their hands'. As to the ending of hostilities: 'Peace is inseparable from national independence', Spinola's representatives were told at talks with liberation leaders in London and Lusaka.[12] There could be no misunderstanding in Portugal: the reply to Spinola was loud and clear – until the right to independence of the African territories was unequivocally agreed to, 'a luta continua' – the struggle would continue!

RACIST THUGS TAKE A HAND

Just as the mass-based popularity of the underground Communist Party had been demonstrated in the streets of Portugal with the overthrow of fascism, so too in the African territories the people demonstrated their overwhelming support for the MPLA, PAIGC and FRELIMO, The streets of Lourenco Marques, Luanda and Bissau were filled with celebrating Africans carrying the flags of the movements and chanting their support. Hasty attempts to set up organisations of moderate Africans collapsed ignominiously. Only in Angola, where signs of disagreement within the liberation movement had been evident for some time – and where Holden Roberto's FNLA/(ex GRAE-UPA) had been waiting in the wings 'to profit from a victory that others would have won.'[13] – was there some cause for encouragement for the imperialists.

However, the realisation that their determined struggle had resulted in the overthrow of the Caetano regime in Lisbon, intensified the struggle of the liberation forces, and great new strides were made in mobilising the people and liberating territory. Hence the spectacular success in Mozambique after the opening of the Zambezia Province Front in July.

Meanwhile, just as reactionary forces in Lisbon were attempting to

foment tension and chaos in order to create the conditions for a reversal of the democratisation processes; so in Mozambique and Angola, the reactionary sectors, desperate at the fall of Caetano, were unwilling to concede defeat. Enjoying the support of the South African and Rhodesian racists, they have been resorting to rioting and murder in an attempt to turn the struggle for liberation into a race war. Serious rioting in Luanda provoked by white racists – as was the case in the 1961 bloodbath – resulted in the deaths of over 100 Africans during July. Similar incidents occurred in Mozambique where pro-FRELIMO whites were attacked by racists, and white farmers killed by black gangs in the pay of these same ultra-racist forces in an attempt to incite a racial confrontation. Warning against these manoeuvres, Samora Machel declared:

> 'The colonialists . . . are striving to show that without colonialism Mozambique would be doomed to a bloodbath between black and white. The very forces which are planning to present the colonial imperialist war of aggression as a civil war, claim to be the only defence against the 'congolisation' of our country.'[14]

The liberation movements are alive to the intentions of the reactionary forces to use puppet black troops and white mercenaries to mask foreign aggression. They are alive to the fact that South Africa and Rhodesia are in a state of exceptional despair over the new situation and 'are going to make every effort to oppose the independence of our people'.[15]

Whilst the colonies are a rallying place for the scum and dregs of bourgeois society, colonialism is also the source and breeding ground of extreme reaction in the metropolitan states. In 1936 the Spanish colonies were the incubator for Franco's uprising. In Algeria the French colons and their secret army were a threat to the Republic and the bulwark of reaction in France. Marx was right in the conclusion he made so long ago: that a people which oppresses other people runs the risk of losing its own freedom.

In Portugal if the new found freedoms were to have the chance of flourishing, the colonial problem had to be speedily resolved.

Whilst the slogan that confronted the Portuguese bourgeoisie and their imperialist backers in Africa was 'a luta continua', in Portugal it was 'a people united will never be defeated'. Their efforts at creating a split between the armed forces and the people, through the promo-

tion of tension and chaos, were frustrated and a crisis situation was reached in the middle of July. A new Provisional Government was formed which has a firmer progressive basis, and is more committed to the democratic and decolonisation programme with the Armed Forces Movement more directly involved. The Portuguese Communist Party paid tribute to the new Prime Minister, Colonel Vasco Goncalves, whose appointment was seen as a major victory for the radical officers over Spinola.

HISTORIC DECLARATION

Thus at the end of July, as a consequence of the heroic struggle of the African people, and of the popular forces in Portugal, the historic declaration was made in Lisbon that Portugal recognised the right of its overseas territories to independence. Portugal pledged through the UN to reach immediate agreements to transfer power to the PAIGC, and to take immediate steps to start negotiations with FRELIMO and the liberation movements of Angola. Apart from these pledges affecting mainland Africa, Portugal also said it recognised the right of the Atlantic islands of Cape Verde, Sao Thome and Principe to independence, as well as the enclave of Macao on the Chinese mainland and the Pacific island of Timor.

Whilst this spectacular about-face in Portugal's 500-year-old history of colonialism and enslavement gives great grounds for optimism and joy, the utmost vigilance will be maintained by the national liberation forces and their supporters until all these pledges are honoured. Only then can it be accepted that Portugal has finally turned the last page of its colonial history.

The breaking of the chains between Portugal and Africa represents a crushing blow for imperialism and has unleashed forces which will be felt on a global scale for years to come. The ramifications for Southern Africa are immediate and profound. Despite the earlier complacent statements, Pretoria is in a state of alarm and the panic buttons are being pressed. Vorster's troops are on permanent alert. During June large numbers of troops were moved into the Caprivi strip, and into the Ovambo border areas between Angola and Namibia. Defence Minister Botha confirmed that guerilla activity was 'endemic in the area'. This

strategic frontier is 1,000 miles long stretching from the Atlantic coast to Zimbabwe. Although South Africa's borders with Mozambique are shorter – 300 miles along the eastern Transvaal bushveld and 80 miles with Zululand – the prospect of a FRELIMO government next door is a terrifying proposition for the racists. The Vorster regime has made it clear that it is going to increase military expenditure and reinforce its armed forces for action against Africa's growing liberation movement. At the opening of the all-white Parliament in Cape Town on 2 August, President Fouche, admitting that 'recent events in Portugal could have far reaching consequences for South Africa', claimed that 'the unpredictable world situation' obliged the government to speed up plans to 'contend with the possible escalation of low intensity war (sic) against South Africa'. At the same time, Police Minister Kruger was offering fat bonuses to South African police – black and white – who 'volunteered' for fighting guerillas on Rhodesia's borders. A few days later Pretoria announced that every fit man under the age of 50 in the police force would now be assigned to anti-guerilla duties along the Rhodesian border.

Imperialism sees a strong South Africa as the main means to continue its domination and exploitation of the Southern part of the continent. 'We have with respect to much of Africa South of the Sahara, a responsibility which the US has undertaken on a much larger scale with respect to the underdeveloped areas of the world as a whole', Vorster maintains. Any threat to South Africa's stability is going to involve the imperialists; particularly Britain and the USA who have such a stake in the area. That is why these circles are dragging the cold war into Southern Africa with their talk of the so-called Soviet naval threat to the Indian Ocean and Cape route. They will use this as a fig-leaf to cover what will in all probability become increasing interference in the area.

FORWARD TO LIBERATION

What some commentators are already calling 'Africa's Second Wind of Change' is in fact the growing strength of the national liberation movement's struggle against imperialism. The imperialists' hope that independence for Mozambique and Angola, under FRELIMO and MPLA

governments can be subverted with neo-colonial ease needs to be assessed in the light of the struggles these movements have been waging and the type of societies that have been developing in the liberated zones. Amilcar Cabral speaks for them all:

> 'We want independence for our country. But that means, for us, much more than acquiring a flag to wave and an anthem to sing. Independence, for us, means the liberation of our motherland and the liberation of our people.'

The 'wind of change' is blowing at gale force. Whilst we have been discussing the situation in Portugal and in her former colonies, let us reflect on the effect of these profound changes on the still enslaved people of South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe; and the implications for the 'hostage' states of Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. When a moderate like Bishop Muzorewa, of the African National Council, remarks that 'Southern Africa is catching fire like the dry grass after a long drought', then one can assume that the impact of these events on the militant and struggling masses of Southern Africa will prove electrifying.

In proportion to the challenge to their interests, the Southern African racists and the imperialists will become ever more desperate. There is nothing they will not stoop to, in order to hold on to their vast treasurehouse of wealth and privilege. The masses, through their leading organisations, mindful of such set-backs as the fascist blood-bath in Chile, and the chaos unleashed in the Congo at the time of its independence in 1960, must remain alert to all dangers. Unity of the progressive anti-imperialist forces of the world is the indispensable condition for the triumph of the peoples' struggle and a solid barrier to any attempts by the reactionaries to reverse the tide of history.

'No manoeuvre or crime on the part of the Portuguese colonialists', Cabral proclaimed two years before his death, 'no power in the world, can prevent the sure victory of our African people, who are on the road to national liberation and the construction of the peace and progress to which they have a right!'

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The African Working Class: recent changes, new prospects

by R.E. Braverman

Important changes are taking place in South Africa. Some of the changes are in response to the needs of the economy. Others are in response to internal and external pressures. It is essential for our liberation movement to assess the nature of the pressures, changes and adaptations, and whether there has been any fundamental change.

The whites have been moving off the land since the hungry 1930's. There is a general tailing off in the demand for labour in the agricultural sector. The introduction of machines to replace hand harvesters, and the use of chemical weedkillers, reduced the seasonal demand for African, Coloured and Asian labour. But there has been an increased demand for labour in urban industries, particularly in manufacturing and construction.

I drew attention in an earlier article[1] to changes in the composition of the South African labour force, and in particular, to the big decline over the past thirty years in the proportion of workers of all races classified as 'labourers'.

The decline can be attributed in the first place to technological progress and the increasing use of machinery in non-mining industrial

enterprises. The labourer of an earlier period now tends to be an operative or a machine minder, both in manufacturing and construction.

Secondly, jobs undertaken by 'white labourers' have been upgraded to the level of 'semiskilled employment', and the re-classification has been applied also to African, Coloured and Indian labourers.

Another contributory factor is the chronic scarcity of skilled workers in a wide range of occupations. Surveys conducted by the South African Chambers of Industries and Associated Chambers of Commerce indicated that the shortage amounted to 101,000.[2]

The shortage has certainly not grown less acute in the past three years, and will undoubtedly become more serious under the conditions resulting from the steep rise in the price of gold and other minerals.

Employers generally anticipate that the demand for skilled workers cannot be satisfied unless colour bars are relaxed, if not abandoned. Ninety-four per cent of businessmen feel that African workers should be allowed to become skilled artisans in 'white' areas.[3] H.F. Oppenheimer, addressing the South Africa Club, complained that the country's sophisticated economy could not grow with the increased use of untrained, undifferentiated migrant workers and an acute shortage of skilled men.[4]

Employers in engineering, construction and manufacturing have repeatedly complained in the past five years of the shortage of skilled workmen. Such opinions are not confined to the private sector. Managements have uttered similar warnings in discussing prospects for railways and harbours, post office, provincial and local government agencies.

IMMIGRATION DRYING UP

Planned and subsidised immigration from Europe is no longer seen as a realistic alternative to the increased employment of black workers in skilled jobs.

The Nationalist government has not abandoned its attempts to encourage immigration, both to strengthen the white population and to obtain artisans and white-collar workers for industry and commerce. But the attempts produce a diminishing return, partly because of the improvement of wages and conditions in Western Europe and partly because of the international anti-apartheid movement.

The estimated intake of immigrants in 1973 was 24,000, as compared with 32,000 in 1972, 36,000 in 1971, and 41,000 in 1970. The number of immigrants has declined, while the number of whites leaving the country permanently has increased.

The big state employers, notably the railways and post office, have responded to the scarcity by absorbing black workers in jobs formerly reserved for whites.[5] The post office has decided to train Coloured, Indian and African technicians in Cape Town, Durban and Pietersburg. A training centre for African post office 'assistants' was opened in Orlando Township, Johannesburg, in December, 1973. The learners received the same theoretical and practical training as that given to whites.[6]

Where possible, the employment of black artisans or white-collar employees is presented as a measure to implement apartheid policies. More than 200 post offices are staffed entirely by Africans, Coloureds and Indians in segregated areas; and members of these ethnic communities are being trained and appointed to serve their racial compatriots in significant numbers of 'white' post offices.[7]

Though said to be consistent with apartheid objectives, these developments are primarily intended to relieve the shortage of skilled white personnel.

OUTLIVING THE COLOUR BAR

A number of reasons can be suggested for the abandonment of traditional colour bars in both the railway and postal services. Both have been notorious areas of sheltered employment for whites. However, white political and trade union pressures have weakened under the conditions of a highly competitive labour market and the loss of white personnel to the private sector, industry and commerce.

There is no question as yet of abolishing the colour bar clauses in the Industrial Conciliation Act, or of doing away with job reservation. Old prejudices and adherence to outworn vested interests continue to influence party policies. The realisation that the old order is passing does, however, come to the surface in statements by Government spokesmen.

Prime Minister Vorster, addressing a banquet to mark the 25th

anniversary of the all-white Co-ordinating Council of South African Trade Unions, which represents the solid core of Nationalist Party supporters in the unions, acknowledged that 'the traditional labour system would have to change to ensure a high economic growth rate. These adaptations would allow black workers to occupy jobs which require greater skill and give them a chance to earn a higher wage'. He predictably gave 'an assurance that black workers' advancement would not be allowed to endanger white workers' security, and on this basis appealed for white workers' co-operation in training Africans for jobs requiring greater skills.'[8]

Employers in the private sector, who for many years agitated against the colour bar, are now able to persuade the white unions to modify their monopolistic attitudes by bribing them. One notable example is the agreement reached by engineering firms with the ten registered unions concerned.[9] The latest agreement allows Africans to be employed in 'C' grade categories, carrying a weekly minimum wage of R47,70. Following the agreement in the engineering industry, the mine owners persuaded the white unions to permit the employment of Africans as 'artisans' aides', in return for higher wages and increased fringe benefits to white miners and artisans.[10]

These examples of institutionalised departures from the rigidities of industrial colour bars represent only the tip of an iceberg. Evasions and flagrant breaches of the colour bar are practised on a wide scale in many fields of employment.

TRADE UNION DIE-HARDS

The white Building Workers' Union, which is centred in Pretoria, has conducted an angry campaign against the allegedly illegal employment of African bricklayers, plasterers, plumbers and electricians by subcontractors, in defiance of the Bantu Building Workers' Act and the Industrial Council Agreements. Contractors operate an elaborate espionage system – using two-way radios, guards and special look-out stations and African patrols – to warn foremen that Industrial Council inspectors are approaching building sites where Africans are doing skilled work, invariably at rates which are less than half those paid to white artisans.'[11]

White building workers get a minimum of R80 per week, plus holiday stamps valued at over R15,00 per week, medical aid and other benefits. African skilled workers are often paid R20 per week, without additional benefits.

Gert Beetge is a notorious diehard – a *verkrampte* in South African terms: that is, a reactionary racist who belongs to the extreme right of the political spectrum and who continues the old crusade for 'whites only' in the skilled trades with a rabid opposition to liberal trends. He is, among other things, secretary of the Anti-Communist League; and has been isolated by the rest of the trade union movement, including its more moderate right wing.

Some other trade union leaders, however, recognise that the racial barriers are becoming obsolete in the expanding economy. A. Elisio, president of the South African Electrical Workers' Association, urged his members to allow Africans to undertake certain categories of work previously reserved for white electricians.[12]

Edward McCann, the general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and president of the Confederation of Metal Building Unions (CMBU), told a Natal seminar that his union had no objection to the training of black apprentices, provided that they receive the same wages, training and conditions of employment as whites.[13]

The new approach of white trade unionists contrasts vividly with traditional policies which have prevailed for the past fifty years.[14] One reason for the new approach is the decline in the proportion of white workers employed in the wide range of industries and trades. The proportion of Africans employed in manufacturing industries increased from 70 to 77 per cent between 1961 and 1971, despite the Nationalists' vicious influx control and apartheid policies, while the proportion of white workers declined.

The number of African wage earners in motor car, metal, plastic and machine industries increased from 81,422 to 91,385, while the number of whites dropped from 32,885 to 31,118.[15] Corresponding shifts have taken place in food, drink, clothing, tobacco industries, and in transportation and communication.

White workers tend to move from less to more skilled occupations, and from skilled jobs to supervisory and administrative posts. Upward mobility is characteristic of the younger generation. Sons and daughters of artisans and semiskilled workers move from wage-earning into clerical

positions, both in the public and private sector, in technical and professional occupations.

Whites from working class families who have become technicians, supervisors and managers tend to identify themselves with the entrepreneurial elite. They resent government interference in the factories and scarcities, whether of labour or materials, that hamper production. Their outlook is 'rational' and orientated to profit-making. Unlike their fathers, they tolerate and even encourage the entry of black workers in what used to be the white workers' preserves.

THE RATIONALE OF PROFIT-MAKING

The climate of white public opinion has changed in favour of the rational values of the employing class. Racial and craft impediments to the flow of labour and the maximisation of profits are being challenged.

White trade unions which used to be a major pressure group behind the policy of sheltered employment for whites are being eroded by declining membership and a steady increase in the number of semi-skilled black workers.

An example is the Transvaal clothing industry. The Afrikaans-speaking women from the rural areas who found work in the clothing factories in the 1930's and 1940's have left the industry and been replaced by Coloureds and Africans. Some white immigrants from Portugal, Italy and Greece entered the industry in the 1950's, but they too found more attractive or remunerative jobs in other spheres. Coloured women also left the industry, and the number employed in the clothing factories dropped from 8,000 to 5,500 between 1960 and 1970. The largest and only reliable source of recruitment is the African population.

Out of approximately 25,000 wage workers in the Transvaal clothing industry, 18,000 are African, 6,000 are Coloureds and Asians, and 900 are whites. The whites form only 3.7 per cent of the labour force, and their average age is now 50 years.

Constraints imposed on employers under the Physical Planning Act have stimulated the growth of manufacturing industry in the Border areas adjoining the reserves or Bantustans of Natal and the Cape. The shift accelerates the Africanisation of the clothing industry, and

confronts the Garment Workers' Union of South Africa with an unavoidable need to organise the African worker, who now plays a dominant part at all levels of employment, skilled and unskilled.

The registered union, the Garment Workers' Union SA, consisting of coloureds and whites, represents only 28 per cent of the workers and can protect their interests only by cooperating with the unregistered National Union of Clothing Workers of South Africa (African). The African workers contribute the bulk of the Industrial Council's income, although they are not represented on the Council and have no direct say in its deliberations. The African Union has a close working relationship with the registered union. This interdependence explains why the Garment Workers' Union advocates a policy of admitting Africans into existing registered unions.

It must be emphasised that, in terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act, Africans are debarred from, but Coloured and Asian workers are eligible for, membership of registered unions, though the officials and executive committee of such 'mixed' unions must be white.

It has been Government policy to discourage the formation of mixed unions even under these offensive and undemocratic conditions, which exclude the coloured and Asian workers from holding office and from executive committee membership, ie, from leadership and decision-making procedures.

Some leaders of the white trade unions, who with dismay watch the decline in membership and income from dues, would like to recruit new members from the black workers, who are now becoming a numerically dominant section of the skilled and semiskilled labour force.

THE ECONOMICS OF POLITICS

I have analysed the structural changes in the economy that explain why employers, white trade unionists and the apartheid Government now tolerate as unavoidable the infiltration of Africans into the white workers' preserves.

There are, in addition, political factors, such as:-

1 The large and persistent wave of African strikes which began in 1972, continued throughout 1973 and shows no sign of abating in the

present year. Many thousands of Africans struck work in a wide range of industries, on the mines, in factories, construction works and transportation, including the docks and railways. Though the primary aim of the strikes was to obtain wage increases, an underlying cause of the workers' discontent was the frustration resulting from the industrial colour bar. Some employers and opponents of the Government pointed out that Africans had few prospects for advancement under existing conditions, could not acquire skills or make full use of their capacities as long as they were confined by law and practice to the lowest rungs of the economic ladder.

2 The intensity of international opinion against South Africa's racist regime. The historic International Trade Union Conference Against Apartheid, held in Geneva in June 1973, unanimously adopted resolutions of a far-reaching character, defining apartheid as an international crime against humanity, and resolving to take positive measures to end it.

3 Another political element is the growing and advancing movement of freedom fighters in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia, and a realisation that the whites will be the ultimate losers in a direct confrontation with the liberatory and progressive forces at home and abroad.

Both conceptions have found expression in a statement by TUCSA leaders – an organisation which represents the 'moderate' section in the racist camp.

TUSCA's National Executive Committee, in its report to the August 1973 Annual Conference, argued that 'the trade unions and Government have a choice between confrontation and conciliation. Let there be no doubt as to who the losers will be in such a conflict. It will be the establishment and the established order.' Acting on this advice, the Conference adopted a resolution recommending the formation of parallel unions of African workers under the wing of the registered trade unions.

Arthur Grobbelaar, TUCSA's general secretary, told the Conference 'that South Africa would not get back in the ILO unless significant changes occurred in the social order'; whilst President L.C. Scheepers said: 'World action against South Africa's apartheid policies had to be expected and could mean the collapse of the South African economy.'

A growing volume of evidence shows that the African working class is

undergoing a qualitative change. In the earlier period of industrialisation, the whites regarded African workers as an undifferentiated mass of labour units, interchangeable, expendable, and easily replaced. The network of discriminatory labour laws – Master and Servants Acts, Native Labour Regulation Act, the pass system, labour compounds – reflected the employers' disregard for the African's personality, dignity and potential capability.

This attitude, though it persists among the white minority, is no longer compatible with the realities of the economic and social structure. Employers and government are being forced by the state of the labour market to train and employ Africans in more skilled and responsible positions.

The relaxation of job reservation, the training and employment of Africans in jobs previously held by whites, is of paramount importance in assessing the revolutionary potential of the African working class.

I believe that this change is altering the character of the African working class. The African working class is not only of *quantitative* importance in the South African economy, but of *qualitative* importance. The African labour force does not consist any more only of labourers, but also of skilled men. Skilled workers are strategically better placed than unskilled migrant workers. The African skilled working class can develop a far greater collective power in the struggle for liberation.

When Africans recognise that the colour bar is not inevitable, and that their inferior position in industry is not permanent, they will undoubtedly move forward towards trade union organisation, and engage in struggle for the removal of pass laws, penal clauses in labour contracts, and the migrant labour system itself.

The state of consciousness of African workers will be shaped accordingly. The history of the African working class supports this. African workers, who bore the brunt of exploitation in the period of capital accumulation, have also been the principal opponents of racial discrimination.

The present situation is favourable to the development of a political struggle against white domination. Africans are now strategically well placed to apply their economic power for the attainment of political objectives.

Industrial action for higher wages and better jobs can be broadened

to include demands for the removal of all types of colour bars, the destruction of the apartheid system and the overthrow of the white racist dominated social order.

The problem of the working class movement and the liberation movement is to develop in the African workers a recognition of the change which is taking place and a consciousness of the opportunities it opens up for them politically as well as economically.

African workers are exploited both as a class and as a race. The abominable racial exploitation is the one which is so much detested. National consciousness supersedes class consciousness, but serves the same purpose. National antagonism is a form of class antagonism in South Africa.

The Africans' demand for democracy under majority rule is equivalent to the demand of class conscious workers for working class rule. In both cases, the demand is for transfer of state power from the ruling class to the oppressed class. The transition from economic to political action will not, however, occur spontaneously. It must be brought about through collective action, solid organisation and revolutionary leadership.

TRADE UNIONS AND LEADERSHIP

The immediate problem for the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) as part of the liberation movement is to provide the leadership and organisational structures that correspond to the favourable conditions for economic and political struggle. We have a favourable climate today for trade union organisation. We must help the workers to get rid of their fears, intimidation, doubts and suspicions. It is a crisis of leadership – the African working class must find the individuals in its own ranks who are ready to accept the responsibilities and risks to organise and lead. A crucial issue confronting us in this situation is: Will advantage be taken of this situation' *Who will organise* the African workers, and *for what?*

A trade union organisation is, by its character and origin, a mass democratic organisation. A trade union would not be able to carry out its tasks successfully if it were not a mass organisation and if this organisation were not democratic. Trade unions are a great school for

the working class. They awaken the class consciousness of the workers; they help them to acquire their first experience of organised collective struggle in defence of their interests, and they prepare the leading cadres of the working class.

It is not surprising that the enemies of the African working class strive by every means to prevent trade union organisation being set up.

The Nationalist strategy since 1948 has been: to smash the radical forces in the liberation movement – the Communist Party, the African National Congress – and to counter the united radical nationalist movement for liberation by establishing the Bantustans. The first was a holding operation, ie, keeping back, suppressing, the revolutionary forces, in order to allow the second to take root.

The Government attacked the African trade unions by the removal of radical leaders from the trade unions as part of the first operation. The trade unions represented the African proletariat and were led by communists and active ANC cadres, who had no vested interests, and still have none, in the Bantustans.

The Bantustan policy aims at confusing the urban proletariat and breaking up their class solidarity by attaching them to one or another of the nine Bantustans. The Xhosas in Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town are, in law, citizens of the Transkei or Ciskei, even though they may never have been there, and where, when elections take place, they are supposed to vote.

The urban African population was never committed to Bantustans. The Bantustan policy was forced upon the Africans.

NO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE

The Government has no intention of loosening its grip. Government spokesmen repeatedly declare absolute opposition to free trade unions for Africans with full rights of collective bargaining. The Government bans every genuine organiser who attempts to assist or create trade unions for Africans. It has introduced more fascistic legislation.

The Government's Bantu Labour Regulations Amendment Act, 1973, is double-edged. On the one hand, it is an attempt to give people at home and abroad the impression that these are far-reaching

'labour reforms' for African workers. On the other hand, it is meant to strengthen the role of the works or liaison committee system as a substitute for genuine trade unions; and to enable the Minister to set minimum wages in industries not covered by Industrial Council Agreements or Wage Board determinations. The so-called legalisation of strikes by African workers permits strikes only under the aegis of a hierarchy of statutory bodies and within extremely narrowly defined circumstances. Workers in the mines, agriculture, transport, essential services, and those for whom conditions of employment are regulated by wage determinations, may not declare disputes. No provision is made in this scheme for representatives of trade unions; the process of negotiation is explicitly ruled out for African workers.

These 'labour reforms' or 'concessions' are designed to weaken the bargaining power of African workers. The establishment of thousands of works committees and liaison committees all over the country aims to fragment even further an already fragmented African labour force, to inhibit the growth of trade unions, and to render unified strike action involving more than one factory almost impossible.

The Act entrenches the policy of treating African workers differently from workers of other racial groups. The liaison and works committees fit into the pattern of Bantustan policy. The Government pressures employers to establish liaison or works committees.

All sections of the white minority, apart from the radicals, are determined to keep African workers in bondage. The United Party, the main parliamentary opposition, is no different from the Nats. Its declared policy is that African workers should be divided into three groups, one group to have full trade union rights – professional people, journalists and doctors; another to have associated membership with existing unions – skilled workers; and a third group to be still under works committees.[16] This is no advance at all. African doctors belong to the Medical Association, and African journalists are members of the Journalists' Association. The suggestion that skilled Africans should have associated membership of the registered unions aims to split the African working class, cut the skilled African workers off from their industrial base, from the mass of the African workers, and keep them at the mercy of the white-dominated registered unions.

SEIFSA – the Steel, Engineering Industrial Federation of South Africa – has launched a campaign to persuade every firm in the metal

and engineering industries to create liaison committees in terms of the Act to ensure industrial peace.[17] African workers have, in the past, rejected the concept of works committees. At a meeting at the Clermont Football Stadium held on 12th January, the 6,000 African workers present with one voice rejected the works committees and voted for trade unions.[18]

But the African workers have voted not only by a show of hands, but with their feet.

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What the Progressive Party stands for

by Z. Nkosi

When the first session of the new Parliament met in August, Mrs. Helen Suzman, who as the only Progressive Party MP had held the flag of the Party aloft for 13 years, was joined by 6 colleagues who had been returned in the April 24 general election and the by-election in Pinelands on June 12. There are some who regard the Progressive Party breakthrough as a sign that South African whites are beginning to abandon their adherence to white supremacy. Moderates of all races have pointed to the Progressive victories as proof that apartheid can be brought down by a change of heart on the part of the majority of whites themselves.

There could be no greater mistake than to think that the Progressive Party road is the true road to a non-racial democracy in South Africa. It is nothing of the sort. An examination of the Progressive Party's record would show that its members, while opposed to the worst excesses of Nationalist apartheid rule, are as firm believers in white superiority as most other whites in South Africa. The implementation of every single item of their proclaimed programme would still leave whites firmly in the saddle in South Africa.

In saying this, we don't wish to take away one jot of the credit for the fine work which has been done by Mrs. Helen Suzmàn – and which may be done also in future by her colleagues – in exposing the atrocities of the Nationalist regime. Year by year she has battled away with single-minded intensity to oppose the restrictive laws and practices of the Government. Her unceasing flow of Parliamentary questions has been an invaluable weapon in penetrating the curtain of lies and silence with which the Government tries to surround its worst atrocities against the people.

But the world knows more about what Mrs Suzman and the Progressive Party are *against* than what they are *for*. Perhaps it is time to set the record right.

UNITED PARTY SPLIT

The Progressive Party was born out of a split which developed at the United Party congress held in Bloemfontein in August 1959, when a majority of the delegates voted for a resolution calling on the Government to halt any further purchases of land to implement the Government's policy of Bantustan. The UP minority held that this resolution was a violation of the undertaking made by the Government in the 1936 Land Act which, in return for the abolition of the common-roll franchise for Africans in the Cape, promised to purchase extra land for African reserves until they constituted about 13 per cent of the total land area of the country.

Coming after the removal of the Coloured voters from the common roll, the host of repressive laws introduced by the Nationalist Government since 1948, and the steadily swelling resistance of the black peoples of South Africa under the leadership of the Congress Alliance, this proved the last straw for the UP minority who felt a change of course was essential if the country was to avoid a revolution. Twelve MPs resigned from the United Party (though not from Parliament) in protest. They were joined by six MPCs and a number of other UP members who formed themselves into a group under the leadership of Dr Jan Steytler.

The Progressive Party as such was formed in November 1959 and held its first conference in Johannesburg during the same month. Its

main policy statement declared that the Party stood for the maintenance and extension of the values of Western civilisation, the protection of fundamental human rights and the safeguarding of the dignity and worth of the human person, irrespective of race, colour or creed. A constitutional commission was appointed under the leadership of Mr Donald Molteno, QC and former Native Representative, and its report was discussed at a conference on November 15 and 16, 1960.

The congress decided that South Africa should have a rigid constitution incorporating a Bill of Rights, but the essence of PP policy was contained in the franchise proposals, which immediately revealed that the PP did not stand for equal rights. The congress decided that all voters should be South African citizens of 21 years and over. There would be two voters' rolls, both non-racial – an A or ordinary roll and B or special roll. Qualifications for the A roll would be:

(a) a Standard 8 certificate or

(b) a Standard 6 certificate and an income of £300 a year or occupation of fixed property valued at £500, or

(c) literacy in an official language (English or Afrikaans) plus an income of £500 a year or occupation of fixed property valued at £500, or

(d) marriage to a person with the necessary income and property qualifications provided the applicant was literate, or

(e) past registration on any list of voters for Parliament, which automatically included all whites.

B roll voters only had to be literate in one of the official languages, and could elect 10 per cent of the members of the House of Assembly, voting 3 months before general elections in especially delimited constituencies.

Party membership was to be open only to those who qualified for the A roll. B roll members would be organised in special branches and would have no say in the formulation of party policy.

On this policy, in the 1961 general election the Progressive Party won one seat (Mrs Suzman in Houghton) and polled 69,042 votes – 8.62% of the total.

The Government had in 1956 finally succeeded in removing the Coloured voters from the common roll in the Cape and placing them on a separate roll to elect four MPs and 2 MPCs. At first the Coloured voters returned UP candidates, but the Government was severely jolted when

in 1965 two members of the Progressive Party, Dr Oscar Wollheim and Mr W.J. van Heerden, won both Coloured seats in the Cape Provincial Council against United Party opposition. The prospect that four PP candidates might be returned to Parliament at the next general election was sufficient to induce the Nationalist Government to abolish Coloured representation in Parliament and Provincial Council and to pass the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968 which prohibited multiracial political parties. The Liberal Party, which claimed a considerable black membership, decided it had no option but disband itself; but the Progressive Party, which had attracted very few blacks to its ranks, decided 'under protest' to continue functioning as an all-white party.

AGAINST EQUAL RIGHTS

From time to time – allegedly to take into account the depreciation in the value of the currency resulting from inflation – the Progressive Party has raised the qualifications for the franchise. Announcing plans to calculate such an increase in March 1970, Dr Steytler stressed: 'Certain politicians had tried to create an impression that the Progressive Party stood for one man one vote. This was most definitely not the case as the party held firmly to the principle of a qualified franchise which would ensure that only those with necessary sense of responsibility would be given the vote'. (*Rand Daily Mail* March 11, 1970.)

Even under the old conditions, the whites were in no danger. Dr E.G. Malherbe, a former Director of Census, in an article in the *Star* on April 4, 1970, said: 'I found that by applying the income qualification as well as the educational qualification, the relative voting strength of the various racial groups to be as follows:

'Whites, 82.8 per cent.

'Coloureds, 4.7 per cent.

'Africans (estimate), 10.3 per cent.

'In short, under this qualified franchise plan there will be at least four times as many white as non-white voters. It should be mentioned, too, that all existing voters will still be eligible to vote. This will tend to increase the proportion of whites still more.

'There is therefore not the slightest possibility (as has recently been claimed by a United Party Member of Parliament) that "if the Progres-

sives' franchise policy is adopted, it would lead to a non-white majority of voters in Natal right now".

'This won't happen in Natal or in any other province of South Africa'.

Just to make sure, all the same, the Progressive Party had by the 1972 congress of the Party raised the income qualification to R810 a year (formerly R600) and the property qualification to R1,350 (formerly R1,000). This increase was said to 'take into account the decline in the value of money up to 1970' (*Progress*, organ of the Progressive Party, September 1972). What with the galloping inflation in South Africa in recent years, it is likely the qualifications will be raised again, if this has not already happened.

The Progressive Party, no doubt conceiving itself to be 'realistic', has always aimed more to appease white opinion in South Africa then to attract blacks to its banners. During the April 24, 1974, general election, Progressive Party speakers tried to impress the white electorate that a vote for a PP candidate was not at all the same thing as a vote for a black majority or a sell-out to the communists.

Here are some relevant quotes:

'The Progressive Party leader, Mr Colin Eglin, said last night he could only see disruption for South Africa under a policy of one man one vote . . . In a tough speech he said that one man, one vote would lead to Black baasskap, which was as unacceptable as White baasskap, and a reshuffle of the whole economic situation'. (*Rand Daily Mail*, April 19, 1974.)

'Real power in South Africa was steadily passing into the hands of the Blacks, Mr Harry Pitman, the new leader of the Progressive Party in Natal, said yesterday . . . Mr Pitman said afterwards he was convinced that without the Progressive Party the future of the country would be decided totally by blacks. "It is becoming clear that the black man is finding his power and will increasingly dictate change in South Africa. The role of the Progressive Party will become more important as confrontation develops".' (*Star*, April 7, 1974.)

In an election dominated by the threat of 'terrorism' on the country's borders, the Progressive Party made it quite clear where it stood.

'What is desperately needed is a crash programme to develop the rural areas, to create the sort of society in which blacks will automatically side with whites' – Mr Peter Mansfield, PP candidate for Umhlanga, reported in the *Star*, March 26.

'The vicious attacks by terrorists over our northern borders, which are doubtless only an outward manifestation of insidious communist underground activity, are obviously only the beginning of a concerted intrusion across our borders' – Ray Swart, national chairman of the Progressive Party, reported in the *Rand Daily Mail* on March 26. He stressed that South Africa's security problem would reach crisis proportions if Portugal withdrew from Angola and Mozambique.

The PP leader, Colin Eglin, stressed that South Africa could play a key role in NATO and Western defence strategy only if it altered its race policies. 'As long as South Africa persists with its race policies, its strategic advantages to the West are offset by its political liabilities' – *Sunday Times,* January 27, 1974.

Natal PP leader Harry Pitman 'pointed out that the Tanzam railway was pointing "at the heart of South Africa", and the Chinese were building an unnecessary second airport in Mauritius. That airport would be used for military reasons, he suggested' – *Star,* March 21, 1974.

ANTI-COMMUNIST

The Progressives are as firmly anti-Communist as any other of the Parliamentary parties. In the House of Assembly on February 13, 1974, Mrs Suzman said: 'The Progressive Party and I are diametrically opposed to Communism. Everything we in the Progressive Party stand for – free enterprise, private ownership, individual rights and the rule of law – runs counter to communist theory and practice'.

However, said Mrs Suzman, she thought the Communist Party should be allowed to function legally. 'Provided the Communist Party obeys the laws and does not advocate violence or subversion, we would not ban it', she said.

However, this was purely her personal view and did not reflect official PP policy. On March 21, 1974, the Natal leader of the PP, Mr Harry Pitman, told a public meeting at Port Shepstone that he 'slightly disagreed' with Mrs Suzman on this issue. 'My personal view is that the Communist Party of South Africa was found guilty during the Rivonia trial several years ago', he said. The banned Communist Party had been tried in the courts of the land and found guilty and it should not therefore be allowed to function legally. (*Rand Daily Mail,* March 22, 1974.)

The Progressive Party also has delusions of grandeur about its role in Africa. It is official PP policy to bring about a 'Federation of Southern Africa', including semi-independent provinces, the Bantustans and independent neighbouring states.

'The Progressive Party does not believe South Africa's problems can be solved through partition on racial lines. But we could do something constructive with Bantustans in an advanced stage of development.

'The door would also be opened for independent states on our borders to join us. All would co-operate in a central parliament whose members would be elected by a qualified vote'. – 'Policy, Fact and Comment', an official PP journal, April 1969.

One can just imagine South Africa's independent black states falling over themselves to become subordinate to South Africa's white dominated Parliament elected by a qualified vote. Yet in pursuance of their dream of empire, PP leader Colin Eglin and Mrs Suzman toured seven African countries during 1971, and returned proclaiming agreement with Africa was possible on the basis of the Lusaka manifesto.

They had met five heads of state and other VIPs. 'Everyone we spoke to rejected race discrimination, in support of dignity of all races. And most agreed there should be a period of graduation to protect the interests of the white minority group'. (*Rand Daily Mail*, October 15, 1971.)

Last July Progressive Party leader Mr Colin Eglin made a similar 'fact-finding' and 'dialogue-promoting' visit to Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia.

Mrs Suzman had paid a visit to Lusaka on her own in 1970 to open a 'dialogue' with President Kaunda. On that occasion she had been severely criticised by African National Congress Acting President Oliver Tambo, who said: 'Mrs Suzman's visit was part of the campaign to persuade independent Africa to accept the fascist policies of perpetual domination of the Black man in Africa'.

Mr Tambo said the Vorster Government realised that no influential Government official dared set his foot in Zambia. It had been calculated that Mrs Suzman's visit would arm her with a passport of acceptability which she would display as she entered one state house after another in her African campaign. 'Mr Tambo said South Africa's plan was to buy Africa out of the freedom struggle so that Messrs Vorster, Smith

and Caetano could pursue their policies without interference'. (*Rand Daily Mail*, December 8, 1970.)

Typical of the PP's approach to Africa was Dr Steytler's statement to a meeting in Maritzburg in 1966 that he had 'no criticism of Dr Verwoerd's approach' on the Rhodesian question. 'He supported Dr Verwoerd's policy of "normal trade" between South Africa and Rhodesia. He, too, did not believe in boycotts and sanctions, he said.' (*Rand Daily Mail*, March 9, 1966.)

Mrs Suzman is another one who opposes boycotts and sanctions. During a tour of America and Britain in 1969 she said she told questioners: 'That I did not think there was anything anyone could do from outside, that the reforms must come from within South Africa. I have spoken against boycotts of any kind, be they economic or sporting'. (*Star*, October 25, 1969.)

In a front-page interview published in Wellington, New Zealand, on May 10 the following year, Mrs Suzman said: 'Boycotting South Africa will in no way change the situation inside. People who think that by withholding sport they are going to get reform are under a misapprehension'.

Four years later she had changed her tune. In a radio interview in Washington she called upon other countries to bring influence to bear on South Africa to change its apartheid policies.

'Subtle and overt pressure can be brought to bear on South Africa, as it does not like being the pariah of the world. There is no doubt about this. The sporting boycott was an effective punitive exercise in that it made many South African sportsmen talk out, who hadn't talked out before'. However, she was still against economic boycotts. Not only did they hit the wrong people, but 'I believe economic development is our greatest weapon against apartheid'. (*Rand Daily Mail*, May 21, 1974.)

ANGLO-AMERICAN INFLUENCE

In this Mrs Suzman is merely echoing the voice of the Progressive Party's paymaster Harry Oppenheimer, head of the giant Anglo-American Corporation whose world-wide assets now total about R5,000 million, and whose personal fortune is variously estimated

at between R200 and R400 million. Harry Oppenheimer is naturally against economic boycotts, which would interfere with his profit-making from exploited black labour in his South African mines and industries, not to mention those in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and other African states.

Many people are inclined to think of Harry Oppenheimer as an enlightened tycoon with a bad conscience, when in fact he is adept at adopting a multi-lateral stance which makes it difficult to pin any label on him, and which would enable him to survive no matter what government came to power in South Africa under the present constitution.

Only a Harry Oppenheimer could in one breath condemn apartheid and in the next proclaim that 'contrary to his expectations and those of opposition political parties, the separate development policy of the Nationalists had helped create a better voice for the Africans. "This policy has resulted in important African leaders who cannot be regarded as political agitators", he said'. (*Star,* April 25, 1974.)

Naturally, Harry Oppenheimer doesn't want any agitators around. That is why he supports the creation of trade unions for blacks. Not black trade unions, mind you. 'Indeed', he said at a conference of the International Iron and Steel Institute in Johannesburg last year, 'the best thing in the circumstances that the Government could do would be to encourage the growth of racially mixed trade unions in order to prevent, if possible, political action on a racial basis by black trade unions'. (*Rand Daily Mail,* October 9, 1973.)

Not surprisingly, the manager of Anglo-American's gold division, Mr Dennis Etheredge, said last year that it was not the Corporation's policy to promote African trade unions on the gold mines. 'We are doing our best to meet the needs of the situation with works committees. The issue of trade unions is not in our minds at present.' (*Sunday Times,* December 9, 1973.)

Perhaps this helps to explain why Anglo-American's mines in the Free State and Transvaal have been the scene of so much violence and disturbance in recent months, with the number of African miners killed by the police after demanding higher wages running into double figures.

Why, it may be asked, waste so much time on Anglo-American in an article on the Progressive Party? The answer is that the PP looks more and more like the political wing of Anglo-American. Harry

Oppenheimer himself stumps PP electoral platforms. His ex-son-in-law, Gordon Waddell, an Anglo-American director, is now a Progressive Party MP. The Progressive Party MP for Pinelands, Dr Alex Boraine, is Anglo-American's adviser on Black industrial relations. Dr Zac de Beer, former United Party MP and a Progressive Party leader, is a top Anglo-American executive.

Not that it is only Anglo-American that is interested in the Progressive Party. In May 1971 it was announced that 'a group of top South African businessmen and economists has agreed to serve on the Progressive Party's newly appointed economics and manpower advisory committee, which is under the chairmanship of Mr Harry Oppenheimer. Those who are to serve on the committee are Mr B.L. Bernstein, chairman of the Anglo-Transvaal Consolidated Investment Company; Mr D. A.B. Watson, Chairman of the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company; Mr E.P. Bradlow, chairman of Bradlow's Stores; Mr Robert Kraft, economic adviser and assistant secretary of the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA); and Mr A.H. Bloom, a director of Premier Milling Company. Mr Bernstein is also a director of Barclays Bank and a former President of the Chamber of Mines. (*Rand Daily Mail,* May 12, 1971.)

You might think you would find more progressive thinking among the Young Progressives, but you would be mistaken. A resolution calling on all Progressive Party-supporting employers to bring black wages up to the effective minimum level was defeated at the national congress of the Young Progressives in Cape Town in July 1973. A milder amendment calling on 'all employers' to 'move towards' reimbursements above the effective minimum level was also defeated. The majority took the typical employers' line that if they paid higher wages 'businessmen might go bankrupt, thus reducing employment opportunities for blacks'. (*Rand Daily Mail,* July 9, 1973.)

The congress also rejected almost unanimously a resolution calling on the party's national executive to reconsider the validity of the party's qualified franchise policy.

All this gives a clue to the quarters from which the Progressive Party draws its electoral support – the mining, industrial and finance houses which realise that if capitalism is to survive in South Africa, the restrictions on the flow and training of African labour must be eliminated. The pass laws must be abolished and a stable and trained African

proletariat created whose productivity will be far higher than the migratory labour force which is all that is available at the moment.

The Progressive Party is not a party of revolution but a party of accommodation and compromise, hoping to head off the incipient African revolution by coming to terms with it before it is too late.

Nor does the Progressive Party's April 24 election success represent the breakthrough that has been claimed for it. In the first place, the PP gained seats from the United Party, not from the Nationalists, whose overall strength in the House of Assembly was increased. The number of votes cast for the Progressive Party was 63,689, or 5.7% of the total number of votes cast – figures poorer both absolutely and relatively than those achieved by the PP in its first election in 1961. (These figures include the votes cast in the Pinelands by-election, which was part of the general election.)

Those hoping that the PP successes in the last general election are a step forward on the road to democracy must think again. If too many people think that, it could turn out to be a step backward because it diminishes support for the programme of struggle mapped out by the Congress movement and the Communist Party which represents the only road to real self-determination, freedom and equality for all peoples in South Africa.

THE ECONOMY: crisis in the midst of 'prosperity'

by Phineas Malinga

For the last twelve years, spokesmen of the South African government have been in the habit of claiming credit for an 'economic miracle'. South Africa, they said, had one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Every year, greater things were being achieved. Other developing nations were being left far behind.

Then on top of these alleged achievements came a colossal stroke of good fortune. For thirty years, South Africa had been agitating for an increase in the price of gold. Quite a modest increase would have been acceptable. Only three or four years ago the French economists who talked of a doubled gold price were considered over optimistic. Yet in the past few years the price of gold has quadrupled.

This should surely set the seal on the great success story. In fact, however, there has been more doubt, uncertainty and downright pessimism among South African establishment economists during the last year or so than for a long time past. What has gone wrong?

It is first necessary to put the sixties into perspective. During the years 1960-61, South African capitalism passed through a brief but sharp crisis of confidence. This was caused partly by an upsurge of

popular resistance and partly by the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth. A certain number of individual capitalists over-estimated the importance of the Commonwealth link. They thought it meant that South African capitalism was being cut off from world capitalism. If that had been true, it would have meant that South African capitalism had no hope of surviving in the face of the people's anger. Therefore some capitalists panicked and sold out and there was a drain of capital from South Africa.

Those capitalists, however, had failed to understand the latest developments in their own system. They did not realise that the Commonwealth had ceased to be important – that in the age of neo-colonialism the international structure of capitalism has become independent of political and constitutional forms. The withdrawal from the Commonwealth was an irrelevance, incapable of producing more than a brief interruption in the operation of the law that capital seeks out the areas of maximum profitability. It is not in the nature of capitalism to withdraw from a country where starvation wages hold out the lure of super profits. On the contrary, capitalism will do everything possible to preserve such a place as a sphere for its operations.

Capitalists who understood these things happily bought up the holdings of their less hard-headed colleagues. The panic was over, capital resumed its natural flow towards the area of high profitability. In doing so, it provided the South African government with the capacity to build a military machine designed to hold the people at bay.

GROWTH FIGURES

During the years from 1963 to the end of the decade, South Africa regularly reported annual growth figures of over 5% in gross national product. This was above average for the capitalist world and represented an important strengthening of the industrial sector of the economy, but there was nothing miraculous about it. It was very much the sort of performance which was to be expected of a country in which four factors were present together. There were firstly a low wage rate leading to an inflow of capital; secondly the existence of some industrial infrastructure providing a base for expansion; thirdly the existence of unexploited mineral and energy resources, providing scope

for expansion and, fourthly, a rapidly growing population.

This fourth factor was often ignored in government propaganda and the analysis of sympathetic bourgeois economists. By concentrating attention simply on the figures for gross national product, which more or less doubled during the decade, they presented an impression of enormous progress. But the population also nearly doubled and the gross national product *per head of population* showed no significant increase. Since inequality increased, the real earnings of the poorest sections of the population actually fell. This, of course, did not disturb the capitalists. On the contrary, they gloried in the two consequences of falling living standards for the working class: firstly, that the level of their own profits was constantly increasing and, secondly, that the attractions of South Africa for foreign capital were greater than ever. In these very achievements, however, lay the seeds of trouble for South African capitalism.

INFLATION

Inflation is a problem which is currently worrying the whole capitalist world, but its extent varies a great deal from one capitalist country to another. In some countries, such as the United States, West Germany and France, inflation is still under control. In others, such as Britain, it is reaching levels which seriously threaten the stability of the whole economic system. It is at first sight surprising that South Africa should find itself in the second category, not the first. Yet that is undoubtedly the case. During the sixties, prices rose in South Africa by amounts varying from 4 to 6 per cent per annum, which is not an alarming rate. Since then, the rate has been of a different order. It reached 10 per cent in the year to 30 June 1973. Estimates for the year 1973-74 vary between 15 and 17 per cent. That is the kind of figure which can lead to panic and to 'wheelbarrow inflation'. Speaking in the South African parliament in April 1974, the United Party's economic affairs spokesman said that the public were 'worried sick'.

'People are terrified of their own futures and their abilities to take care of their families if we are going to have rises as we have had over the past year and a half', he said. 'It's hitting not only the lower-income group, but right through all groups, except the very wealthy. There is a

situation of complete perplexity as to how to cope with the problem.'

The South Africans are particularly perplexed because they are not guilty of the errors of economic management which have led to dangerous rates of inflation in other countries. In Britain, for example, the Tory government resorted to reckless deficit financing in a desperate attempt to stimulate a stagnant economy, and the British currency was also undermined by a persistently adverse balance of payments. South Africa, however, has a favourable balance of payments, an economy which is far from stagnant and has not incurred large Budget deficits. What, then are the causes of South African inflation?

To find the answer, we have to return to the central feature of the South African economy – to the fact that it is a low-wage, high-profit economy. Such an economy, as we have already noted, attracts an inflow of capital. In a freely functioning market situation, certain correcting tendencies would result. Intense competition between capitalists, for markets on the one hand and for labour on the other, would drive prices down and wages up. Therefore profit levels would fall towards the world average figure and when that figure was reached, the capital inflow would cease.

South Africa, however, is very far from a freely functioning market situation. Wage levels are held down by a whole monopoly of repressive laws. Capitalists are not allowed to compete freely for labour. The cheap labour reservoirs of the landowning class and the gold mines are artificially and vigorously protected. At the same time, manufacturing industry is highly cartelised and operates behind protective tariff barriers, so that price competition is very weak. As a result, the profit levels which were already among the highest in the world, continue to rise. In the same year, 1972-73, in which the general level of prices rose by 10 per cent, this is what happened to corporate profits in manufacturing industry:-

3rd quarter 1972	R 148 million
4th quarter 1972	R 158 million
1st quarter 1973	R 167 million
2nd quarter 1973	R 197 million
3rd quarter 1973	R 220 million

This represents a 30 per cent increase over the financial year, while

the figures for the third quarter of 1973 are no less than 50 per cent up on the same quarter of 1972. Coming at the same time as a large increase in the profits of the gold mining industry, these figures represent a capitalist's dream of paradise. But the victories of capitalism always contain the seeds of ultimate defeat. The real expansion of the South African economy is severely limited by the remnants of feudalism built into the system. The landlords will not surrender their vast reservoir of unskilled, inefficiently used, slave labour. Therefore there are severe limits on the productive outlets which can be found for capital in South Africa. At present, the system literally has more money than it knows what to do with. The fabulous profit levels inevitably attract still more capital until the system is awash with money trying to get in on the act. The result is the dangerous level of inflation which we have just mentioned.

PEOPLE'S DISCONTENT

This leads in turn to the phenomenon which will eventually bring the whole edifice crashing down. Inflation is building up working-class discontent to a point at which it can no longer be contained even by a highly-developed fascist repressive machine. The overall inflation figure understates the calamities which are overtaking working-class households. In 1972, the official Consumer Price Index rose by 10 per cent, but the figure for foodstuffs alone rose by 17.1 per cent. On a single day, 1 May 1973, the price of mealies went up by 15 per cent. At that time, the Johannesburg *Star* estimated that basic foodstuffs of the African population were likely to go up in price by about 60 per cent during the year.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that strikes are becoming increasingly frequent, in spite of the fact that the system permits no strikes by African workers. These strikes present the ruling class with a terrible dilemma. If African wages had been raised years ago, the present problem would never have arisen, but once inflation has taken hold, wage increases tend to fuel the flames. Furthermore, any concession granted in the face of visible popular pressure can be fatally damaging to the morale of a 'granite' autocratic regime. The flexibility which enables British or French capitalism to survive many

defeats at the hands of striking workers does not exist in South Africa. Yet it is physically impossible for the African working class to carry on without large increases in the nominal amount of their wages.

THE OUTLOOK

When the South African government puts out propaganda about the glittering economic future of the country, they do not lack material to use for the purpose. They claim, and it is true, that South Africa is one of the few capitalist countries which can afford to pay the new prices for oil. They claim, and it is true, that money is available to finance industrial development on a colossal scale. They claim, and it is true, that South Africa offers better profit rates to capitalists than almost any other country.

Yet all this does not add up to one good reason for optimism, and in its heart the South African ruling class knows it. The stability of the system has gone, destroyed by the greed of those who operate it. Changes have now got to be made, and it is far more difficult for a reactionary ruling class to control and direct change than simply and stubbornly to resist it. We are entering a period of great opportunities for the people's movement.

3 Decades of Socialism in BULGARIA

by GEORGI BOKOV

Member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party

Almost three decades have elapsed since the historical victory of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria. The victory of the revolution, the profound changes in the life of our country, the brilliant success of her socialist construction, the fruits of the new social reality provide one more vivid example that in our time only socialism creates conditions for quick development, for independence and prosperity, for happiness and well being of the people in a country which has shed the fetters of imperialism. This is why our people are preparing to celebrate festively this great and joyous event. The thirtieth anniversary of our socialist revolution is also an occasion to draw up a balance-sheet of what has been achieved so far, as well as inspiration for even better organised, ideologically meaningful and fruitful efforts of all working people in the name of the great objective: the construction of an even stronger and closely knit, spiritually and materially advanced socialist society.

Bulgaria is a small country with a population of about 9 million, situated in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula. The revolutionary

Marxist party of the Bulgarian working class is among the oldest in the international working class and communist movement. It was founded more than eight decades ago, a short time after the liberation of our people from five centuries of Osman rule, at a time when the capitalist social relationships were still immature in Bulgaria. The main and also the acutest class contradictions of that time – economic and political, social and national – found a vivid reflection in the struggle of the newly emerging revolutionary forces of the Bulgarian society. The young working class and the working people in general were lucky that the revolutionary socialist movement in this country had an ideologically sound and well organised leadership, that it was developing under the favourable influence of the most progressive section of the international socialist movement, in particular of the communist and revolutionary movement in Russia, that it was founded by such a remarkable Marxist revolutionary as Dimiter Blagoev, and was later led for a long period by Georgi Dimitrov, the ardent and consistent Leninist proletarian internationalist, one of the outstanding functionaries of the international communist movement.

The armed uprising of the Bulgarian workers and farmers in September 1923 was a glorious page of history. It was the first anti-fascist uprising in Europe. For twenty long years after the uprising was crushed our party worked underground, and was given the opportunity for more open activity only for short periods. Thus it had to stick to the rules of utmost secrecy, yet to seek and find a number of legal forms of struggle constantly strengthening its links with the popular masses.

During the Second World War and in particular after nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union there emerged in the country a broad anti-fascist movement led by the Communist Party. The royal regime involved Bulgaria in the nazi coalition, allied itself with the most reactionary imperialist circles in the world. The regime tried by bloodshed and terror to stifle the revolutionary forces of the people, to debilitate its communist vanguard. But the Communist Party launched a courageous organised struggle, founded the Fatherland Front and started the liberation partisan movement, set itself on a resolute course preparing for an armed uprising. Thanks to the Party's fearless political activity and armed struggle the fascist government did not dare send even one Bulgarian soldier to the Eastern Front.

The September Ninth, 1944 uprising, which was victorious with the decisive assistance of the Soviet Army, put an end for ever to the imperialist domination and opened a new era in our social and national development, cleared the way for the construction of socialism in Bulgaria. This was a great turning point. The capitalist class, which had committed national treason, was toppled from power, which passed into the hands of the working class in alliance with the farmers. Our new people's democracy emerged. The Communist Party, allied with the other anti-fascist political parties and movements became the leading force. Bulgaria took its place in the ranks of the peaceloving, progressive and revolutionary world forces, whose sound and invincible mainstay is the Soviet Union.

CAUSE OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

Vladimir Ilich Lenin, the leader of the victorious socialist revolution, remarked that 'socialism could be built only when ten and a hundred bigger masses than before start to build the state and the new economic life themselves'. Our party followed this directive of Lenin and in its work among the masses was always trying to develop their activity and initiative, to organise them better in the construction of socialism. Socialism brought millions of working people into the political and the economic life. What is more socialism became their own cause, it was built as a society of working people and for the working people.

Former Bulgaria was a state of the capitalists and the rich. A handful of corrupt rulers, the owners of the big finance and commercial capital had a free hand in it. The working class was the object of cruel exploitation, the wages were low, there was a chronic and large unemployment. Life in the countryside was also far from joyous. Despite the proverbial industry of the farmers, farming was backward, low yielding and secured only a poor livelihood for the owners and the farm labourers. The access of the sons of the working class and the farmers to education and science was limited. The ruling class was trying to shape the intelligentsia and most of all its better educated part out of the privileged social strata.

The social picture in Bulgaria is now radically different, unrecognisable. With the abolition of capitalist ownership, the liquidation of

economic backwardness, the strengthening of the socialist relationships of production, an end was put to unemployment, poverty, and the roots of these evils were removed. In the place of the small, oppressed and exploited proletariat (30 years ago there were only 100,000 industrial workers in this country) there is now a millions-strong working class, organised in its own powerful and free unions, represented by large socialist collectives.

The foremost role of the working class in the overall life of the country is determined by its position in social production, its consciousness and discipline, by its profound interest in socialist development. The working class advances in sound alliance with the farmers, who, by implementing Lenin's co-operative plan, adjusted to the specifically Bulgarian conditions, have become socialist working people. Both the working class and the co-operative farmers are soundly connected with the socialist property, participating actively in the management of the country and of the production. There is among them a growing self-confidence of masters of their own country among them, higher cultural standards and awareness. A broad emulation movement is developing among them, and is constantly being enriched with new and improved forms. The intellectuals play a great and constantly growing role. Most of them originate from the working class and the farmers. The moral and political unity of the entire society is strengthening.

ECONOMIC ADVANCE

The accelerated development of the economy, of the production forces, lies at the basis of the role of the party in the transformation of society, in the successes of socialism. This is why our party has always given priority to the construction of the material and production base. We are proud of the fact that there has never been in Bulgaria such scope of construction, never have been such rates of growth of the industrial and agricultural production, never have been so many goods for the people. Over the years of people's government industrial production has grown about 40 fold. Now in less than a week our industries put out more than was put out in the whole of 1939.

Progressive structural changes have occured in the country's economy. Such important new branches as power generation and metal-

lurgy, engineering and chemistry, electronics and instrument building have been created and developed. Thanks to Soviet assistance the country was literally covered with modern heavy and light industries. Mechanisation has been introduced in agriculture as well. The effectivity of farm labour has grown, our farmers have forgotten the proverbial poverty which was their lot in the past.

The line of industrialisation already mapped out at the Fifth Party Congress in 1948 by Georgi Dimitrov and taken up with a new energy by the April Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party of 1956 has had a powerful influence on the entire course of our economic development. The statistics about the fulfilment of the plan in 1973 are eloquent proof of the steady upsurge of our socialist economy: the national income is 8.7 percent bigger than in 1972. The rate of growth of the national income is stable in Bulgaria. It is among the highest in the world.

It is thanks to the socialist social system, the correct economic co-operation between the socialist countries, that small and formerly backward Bulgaria became part of the scientific and technological revolution and was able to achieve such high rates of development.

Our industry, represented by a number of plants and combines of a high and up-to-date standard, is managed according to plan and is organised in a small number of economic organisations which have their independence and at the same time follow a unified economic policy and are a centralised technical management. The formerly patched and primitive rural economy is represented by 170 agro-industrial and industrial-agrarian complexes, which are large socialist farming enterprises, where production is mechanised and is developing on a scientific basis. Thanks to this, with considerably less labour force employed in the countryside the agricultural output is now three times bigger, compared to the past.

Three years ago we had our Tenth Party Congress. It adopted Directives for the Sixth Five Year Plan and a new Party Programme. This was an important event in the life of the country as a whole because the programme set the task to construct an advanced socialist society in Bulgaria. The fulfilment of this task is connected with qualitatively new prospects in the development of both society as a whole and of the individual, to new material and cultural standards.

Following upon the Congress decision a plenary session of the

Central Committee in December 1972 worked out a broad programme for raising the material standards of the people. The line adopted was for increased nominal wages and simultaneous increase of the acquisitions through the public funds of consumption with stable prices. The consistent fulfilment of this line has increased the real per capita income by 20,0 percent, and that of the co-operative farmers by 25,5 percent, in three years.

Following the decisions of the December plenary session of the Party's Central Committee the social security funds were also increased. The small pensions as well as the old age pensions of the co-operative farmers were increased (in Bulgaria pensions are given also to the working people in agriculture). Corrections are now under way putting the pensions in par with the increased incomes of the active population. There are huge funds allocated for health services which are free in Bulgaria. The state shows a constant attention to education. Gradually there is a change over to universal high school education. A broad programme is under way in the country for the construction of creches and kindergartens. Important maternity benefits were also guaranteed.

We are making efforts to overtake the advanced socialist and capitalist countries in the public productivity of labour. This, as pointed out by Todor Zhivkov, First Secretary of the CC of the BCP at the recent National Party Conference, is a key problem for the construction of an advanced socialist society in the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

'We are fully convinced', said Comrade Todor Zhivkov, 'that socialism will manifest its full advantage over capitalism not only in the sphere of social relationships, not only in the sphere of culture and ideology, not only in setting up a better organisation of economy and of society as a whole, but in the sphere of the public productivity of labour as well'.

INTERNATIONALISM

Our people and party look at socialist construction not only as a national achievement, but also as an important international contribution. Our successes and acquisitions in the construction of the new society confirm the vitality of socialism, the viability of its ideals. They

contribute to strengthening the positions of international socialism, the forces which are the mainstay of peace, national independence and social progress. Thus the Bulgarian Communists and all working people spare no effort in achieving an even greater success in the development of the economy and the culture of our socialist fatherland, thus giving an expression of their unity and cohesion with the socialist countries, of their solidarity with the popular and revolutionary forces fighting imperialism and neo-colonialism for national and social liberation.

Ever since its emergence thirty years ago the People's Republic of Bulgaria has proceeded in its international policies from the fact that it is an integral part of the world socialist community, the primary force in the international revolutionary process. It bases its relations with the fraternal socialist countries on the rock foundations of socialist internationalism. They are increasingly drawn together on the basis of socialist economic integration, which in recent years has produced particularly good results. There is increased co-operation now in the ideological and cultural activities, in their unity of action on the international arena. The cornerstone of our overall foreign policy has always been the friendship and co-operation with the Soviet Union, which is the mainstay of world socialism, in its fight for peace and better life, for understanding and co-operation among the peoples. We adhere wholeheartedly to the active and constructive international policies of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the remarkable programme for a strengthened world peace, worked out by CPSU's Twenty Fourth Congress. We hail the great efforts made in this direction by Leonid Ilich Brezhnev, the Secretary General of the CC of the CPSU.

Our party and the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria are deeply satisfied with the world trend towards lessened international tensions, the change from confrontation between the countries of different social system to seeking ways and means for the solution of the controversies peacefully. We have always proceeded from the understanding that the relationships between the socialist and the capitalist countries would be developed on the basis of mutual advantage. In recent years our foreign policies have been centred on the problems of peace and security in Europe with particular attention, naturally enough, for relations in the Balkans, which once upon a time were Europe's powder keg.

The Bulgarian Communist Party and the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria express full solidarity with the national liberation movement of the peoples and render it a fraternal internationalist assistance.

More than five years have passed since the Moscow Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties. The years since then have confirmed the vitality of the document adopted by the conference: 'The tasks of the Struggle Against Imperialism at the Present Stage and the Unity of Action of the Communists' and Workers' Parties and of all anti-imperialist forces.' With its overall activities our party adds its contribution to the cohesion of the communist parties the world over. It supports actively the idea of a new international conference of the communist and workers' parties to discuss the considerable changes that have taken place in the international situation with a view to increasing the role of the international Communist movement in social development.

The communists and all working people in this country give expression to their solidarity with the struggle of the Communist Party of South Africa and the other progressive and revolutionary forces in the Republic of South Africa. They are confident that, despite the difficulties, they shall be victorious in their just struggle for liberation.

New way in CONGO PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

by Vladimir Shundeyev

In the People's Republic of Congo, people speak of one hundred years of anti-colonial struggle and of ten years of revolution – the national, democratic, people's revolution. The Congolese Party of Labour (CPL), the country's only and ruling party, was founded four years ago.

Congo and Guinea have much in common: both are socialist-oriented and both follow a consistent anti-imperialist policy, are working to unite the nation around that policy, overcome the difficulties of building up a national economy, weakness of the state sector, inadequate investment funds, currency disarray, high prices, a large share of the population living by subsistence farming etc. But there are important differences. The two countries, and particularly the two parties, began their development at different times. Their leaderships subscribe to different economic development strategies. In Guinea for instance foreign assets were nationalised in the early years of independence, while in the Congo the state sector is being built up mainly through new construction and nationalisation has not assumed appreciable proportions. Guinea's per capita national income is small whereas Congo, according to UN statistics, ranks with the top ten African

states. Lastly, unlike Guinea's mass Democratic Party, the Congolese Party of Labour is so far a small vanguard Party basing its programme and activities on scientific socialism, Marxism-Leninism.

One's first impressions differ too. And not only because the ferry that takes one across the Congo river from Kinshasa to Brazzaville is less impressive and picturesque than the road to Conakry lined with slogan-inscribed streamers. What catches the eye in the Congolese capital are billboards with such familiar names in the capitalist world as SHELL, CITROEN, KODAK, TEXACO, RENAULT, VOLKSWAGEN, OLIVETTI, SONY. There are attractive shops and well-stocked department stores, with a supermarket under construction. But everywhere one feels the dominance of foreign capital.

All available experience of social transformations suggests that the most consistent way of building the material and technical basis of the new society in countries that have chosen socialist orientation is nationalisation of foreign companies, giving the state control of the economy.

In this respect Congo's experience is peculiar. How does the Party justify the path it has chosen? What are its underlying theoretical principles?

PATTERNS OF NATIONALISATION

This is the explanation I was given by Christof Mukueke, the Party's propaganda secretary:

'This is a delicate question and for us it has practical rather than theoretical implications. Our Party programme says: "At the stage of national, democratic and people's revolution, the Congolese Party of Labour has as its priority aim economic independence; to be followed in the next stage by socialisation of the basic means of production in the People's Republic of Congo". We know that a number of African countries that have won political independence immediately set out to nationalise foreign assets. Lacking an economic base and management knowhow, many of them were faced with formidable economic difficulties. When we performed our revolution in August 1963, we felt that we were not yet prepared for nationalisation. Lenin's words, addressed to economic managers of the young Soviet Republic in the difficult years when it had to enlist foreign capital and grant concessions to help build up the socialist economy, fully applied to us. Lenin

said at that time: "You will have capitalists beside you, including foreign capitalists, concessionaries and lease-holders. They will squeeze profits out of you amounting to hundreds per cent; they will enrich themselves, operating alongside of you. Let them. Meanwhile you will learn from them the business of running the economy . . ." (*Coll. Works* Vol. 33, p. 71-2).

'Now there is a differentiated approach to national and foreign private capital. We encourage the former, so that it can help the Party in the fight for economic independence. As for the latter, the policy is gradual elimination, for foreign capital is the source of the main contradiction of Congolese society, that between the people and foreign, chiefly French, monopoly capitalism.* So far, however, we find ourselves obliged to work in contact with French capitalists who, incidentally, have proved adroit in adapting to our policy. In fact, of late they have suggested forming mixed companies, and we agreed to that with the proviso, of course, that we have a controlling interest.

'There is not enough investment capital. That largely explains the rather peculiar orientation of Party economic policy. We must convince the people that the path chosen is the correct one. After all, people must live and eat while making revolution. Besides, bourgeois and racialist propaganda is trying to instill the idea that black Africa cannot build socialism. The imperialists are increasing investments in capitalist-oriented African countries to prove that capitalism is the only way ahead.

'A recent Central Committee decision is designed to set things right in the state sector, give it sounder leadership and more competent personnel. So far we have been sending people to work in the state sector without even defining their functions. That was a mistake, and it has had ruinous results. "Instead of adding to state revenue", Marian Nguabi, Chairman of the Party's Central Committee said in one of his speeches, "State enterprises have been adding to the budgetary deficit we inherited from the past. The fault is not with the enterprises, but with the lack of managerial experience . . . One example: at a time when state-owned enterprises find the going hard, one of them, the post office, has been spending 33 m. francs a year on staff bonuses . . . that

*Since this article was written, it has been reported that imports and sale of oil products have been nationalised and transferred to a new state company, Hydro-Congo.

money would suffice for three new post offices to serve the people".'

The Party has declared war on sabotage and corruption, laxity and irresponsibility among managerial personnel. All state institutions have been instructed to apply the principle adopted by the Fourth Trades Union Congress: 'He who does not work neither shall he be paid'.

In the light of all these facts one can appreciate the Party's efforts, begun late in 1973, to cut administrative expenditure and economise wherever possible. For instance, the so-called 'representation' expense accounts have been cut, office cars abolished, no more 'thirteenth month' salary for top ranking officials, and all this is coupled with stringent control of how public money is used.

BIRTH OF A PARTY

In examining these and all other questions of the Congolese revolution, Christof Mukueke said, it is important to keep in mind that our Party is still very young. The decisive organising force of the 1963 revolution was not the Party but the trade unions. But even they were weak, some under Catholic influence, others avowedly oriented on France, etc. Little surprise then that the question is still being debated of whether the objective and subjective conditions for revolution were ripe. The main thing is that the masses supported the revolution.

But the masses were not organised, had no leading core, no adequate understanding of the revolution's aims. For that matter, the revolutionaries themselves, with only Congo's experience or that of the French Left to guide them, were sorely in need of organisation. That is how the National Revolutionary Movement was founded at a Congress in 1965. It brought together elements of diverse orientation and this political heterogeneity soon made itself felt. Its leader, Numazalai, from the outset tried to isolate the progressive elements. This precipitated a crisis. The more consistent revolutionary groups within the movement were aware of the need for a more clear-cut organisation. The National Council of the Revolution was formed with Major Marian Nguabi as its leader. It brought together three viable elements, civilian revolutionaries, the 'civil defence' group (made up of young servicemen) and progressive elements within the army. It set itself the aim of creating a new political structure and founding a new Party. The Congolese Party

of Labour was founded at a constituent Congress in December 1969.

The Party's path has been a tortuous one. Drawing up an ideological platform proved a difficult job. There were still tribal traditions to reckon with, and the discord they generated within the Party. In March 1970 there was the abortive counter-revolutionary coup led by Lieutenant Kinganga, a man closely linked with reactionary elements in Kinshasa and supported by the gendarmerie and other elements within the country. At its First Emergency Congress in March-April 1970, the Party adopted measures to strengthen the revolution. One of them was to disband the gendarmerie and transfer all its functions to the army. Unrest among students and school pupils, obviously instigated, broke out in November 1971. In February 1972 there was another attempted coup, this time led by Lieutenant Diavarra, a member of the Party leadership. This came as an especially heavy blow, for many Party members were involved, and after the putsch was suppressed only 18 of the 50 Party Central Committee members remained. It took much effort to explain to the people what had happened. The Party began a nation-wide campaign, culminating in a national conference in July 1972 of representatives from all sections of the people. The Party engaged in self-criticism and heeded the criticism of the masses.

'A clash at the top' is how Party Chairman Nguabi described it. 'The leading core of the Congolese Party of Labour was but a heterogeneous group or a collection of groups widely differing in their views and subscribing to socialism only in words . . . The Central Committee was at the mercy of these groups and was not an effective revolutionary vanguard'.

It was only at the July 1972 Conference that, in effect, the Party was accepted as the country's leading force. The Second Emergency Congress (December 1972) called for strengthening the Party and its organisations to create a viable Party structure. Members of the Central Committee elected by Congress toured the country to set up local government bodies and enrol new members.

Of course a Party is judged not by its slogans but by its achievements. And these, Mukueke remarked, are modest indeed: for three years there was no programme, it was approved only in December 1973.

'We decided to disband the police and replace it by a public security force. The first elections to the National Assembly and local government bodies were held only in July 1973. The Constitution was

approved by national referendum. In short we are only just beginning to put into practice the Party Programme, and are not satisfied with the results to date, but we have sorted things out and can move ahead.'

The most pleasant and impressive sight in Brazzaville are the school-children. Strong, sturdy, neatly dressed they seem to dominate the city. One gets the impression that the country has a long-standing intellectual tradition or a deeply rooted urge for knowledge. Everywhere you see people reading, in the daytime sitting on doorsteps or on the grass, in the evenings under the street lamps you will see students poring over their notes. Lectures on the revolutionary movement and theoretical seminars are held daily in the town hall and there is always a full audience. Similar lectures over the radio are very popular too, especially among the youth. Listener groups are formed and I was told that the lectures have a sizable audience in neighbouring Zaire, Cameroon, Gabon and Chad. The next radio lecture series will be on the theory and practice of building socialism.

EDUCATION & OPPORTUNITY

I learned much from my talk with Martin Mberi, education secretary of the Party Central Committee.

'There is a historical background to the problems we have to solve. The French colonialists made the Congo a reservoir of administrative personnel for the whole of Equatorial Africa. That explains why we have a fairly developed system of primary education and also for the training of administrative personnel. You can say that we took over a good inheritance when we won liberation. Of course, all education was biased, the French were concerned only for training clerks. There was only one technical school, and it specialised in training stonemasons. Civil servants were educated in the spirit of disdain for everything technical and abhorred manual work. After independence, the white civil servants were replaced by black, but the old psychology, the ingrained prejudices of the colonial days, persisted.

'By the 40's the bulk of the population could read and write. There were primary schools in the rural areas, secondary schools in the towns and a university in the capital. Our job was to extend the system and change its character. Today virtually all children attend school. But

there is still the problem of illiteracy. In fact, the Party programme speaks of eliminating illiteracy among the adult population. We understand this to mean eliminating "job illiteracy", that is teaching people more arithmetic, giving them a better idea of their job, a better understanding of the changing world they live in, and a higher sense of civic duty.

'There is also the problem of what to do with specialist personnel: increase employment in the civil service so that everyone has work, or leave some unemployed. Obviously, in our underdeveloped economy there are more specialists than we can use. We are opening new technical schools, but, so far, we cannot use all their graduates.

'The important thing, however, is that we are fully aware of the situation. Education has been nationalised and secularised. In 1970 the Party adopted a programme defining the aims of primary and secondary schools. The ideological aim is to cultivate a national consciousness, and root out survivals of the colonial mentality. The social aim is to give the pupils an understanding of imperialist exploitation and, in a more practical aspect, bridge the gap between their education and the requirements of society.

'The Party education system has developed in its own way too. Unlike some other countries of what was once French Africa (Senegal and Guinea for example) where a kind of revolutionary elite began to take shape at a relatively early state, the progressive, anti-imperialist ideology in Congo took definite form only at the close of the 1950s. Our first organised party, the National Revolutionary Movement, was a pretty motley affair, made up of revolutionaries active in the underground movement of colonial days, and with all the vacillations and ideological differences that were part of that movement. And debate and controversy, confrontation of views with little attempt to work out a common line, are characteristic of ideological work even today.

'It is only against this background that one can really appreciate our victory in making Marxism-Leninism the underlying ideology of the Congolese Party of Labour. True Party education exists more in plans than in practical reality, but we are giving it all our attention. Valuable assistance is coming from friendly socialist countries, notably the Soviet Union. We have started a Party school, so far confined to three types of short-term courses. Central Committee members have gone through a week's course in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, also Party

members. The next course will be taken by members of parliament. Later on we intend to run a six-month school and a regular three-year course with diplomas issued to graduates. The fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism – political economy, philosophy and law – are taught at the university and the National Administrative School.'

OF CLASS & PARTY

Central to all Party work today is increasing the membership, firming the organisational structure and expanding links with the masses.

'Organisational work is today the Party', Central Committee Organisation Secretary Emile Bonguande said, 'and it is only natural that Party building was the main question at the October 1973 Central Committee Plenum. It worked out a new leadership structure: a five-member political bureau headed by the Party Chairman, a standing Secretariat headed by a Politburo member, and a permanent CC Secretary. The Central Committee has four departments, on international relations, education, organisation and propaganda, each headed by a CC Secretary, and two Commissions, on the army and on planning, likewise headed by CC Secretaries, and besides these the Party Control Commission. The Central Committee appointed ten of its members political commissars to supervise work at provincial and district level, organise local government and bring new people into the Party.'

'The Congolese Party of Labour', its programme says 'must become the class Party and vanguard of the Congolese working class'. So far it has a small membership, is stringent in admitting new members and in no hurry to do so, though it has thousands of applications on file. It therefore devotes special attention to work in the mass organisations, those 'parallel Party organs'.

My first meeting with A. Kondo, Chairman of the Congolese Trade Union Federation, was in a rather curious setting. I found him sitting behind a huge desk leafing through a copy of *Trud* the Moscow Trade Union daily – it had an interview with him taken during the World Trade Union Conference in Varna. The Congolese trade unions are eager to expand their international ties and learn from the experience of other countries. But, naturally, their chief concern is how to boost job

discipline, raise productivity, help to build up the national economy and achieve the Party's aims.

The trade union slogans of the 'decisive three' and the 'three-in-one' have taken hold. They were endorsed by the last Party Central Committee Plenum. The 'decisive three' are the Party, the state and the trade unions, and the 'three-in-one' is their joint leadership, joint responsibility and joint work in building up the national economy.

Still another pressing problem of Party work is the campaign against laxity and bureaucracy. The slogan now is: 'Seven hours of work, not seven hours at work', and the trade unions have been effectively instrumental in carrying it out.

All adult women belong to the Revolutionary Women's Union of Congo, we were told by M. Panati, Vice-President of its National Executive and A. Nene, member of the Central Council and permanent organisation secretary. The union was founded in 1965 to advance women's social emancipation, eliminate illiteracy and enhance women's role in public life. The union is now a mass organisation working under Party guidance, has branches in all provinces and districts and groups in the villages. It also has closer international contacts, is affiliated to the International Democratic Women's Federation and maintains close contact with the Soviet Women's Committee.

On the desk of G. Okabando, First Secretary, Congolese Socialist Youth League, was a volume of Lenin articles and on the walls were pennants of youth organisations of the socialist countries and the Berlin Youth and Students' Festival. Central Committee members Onka and Lambo, and Joma of the International Department, took part in our talk. The first thing I learned was that three-quarters of the League membership were now out helping to organise local government in the rural areas.

'Our tasks are identical with those of the Party', the comrades emphasised, 'and the main thing now is to strengthen popular rule. (This is symbolised in the League's emblem: Hoe and Hammer, Pen and Submachinegun on the background of a map of Congo.) The youth is especially receptive to social change and we consider it our duty to convince the adults, relatives, friends and acquaintances of the correctness of the Party's policy, explain to them the aims of the Congolese revolution'.

Special attention is devoted to the Young Pioneer movement, which

is in charge of a Commissioner General, the Organisational Secretary of the Central Committee. Incidentally the Central Committee has no full-time officials – everyone is expected to work at a factory or office.

LOOKING FORWARD

'Strengthening the Party and its links with the masses', Permanent CC Secretary Piere Nze, who is a member of the Political Bureau, said, 'will be the main question in preparations for the Second Party Congress to be held later this year, on the Party's fifth anniversary.

'At the Congress we shall be able to record that the Party has become stronger and bigger, with probably two-thousand members and branches in the main administrative centres and in the big industrial enterprises.

'The Congress will also be able to record closer national unity in democracy – a democratic state structure, election of all authorities, and an anti-colonialist state apparatus. (It might be noted that in the name of this unity the Party recently amnestied political prisoners, including some involved in anti-government plots.)

'Painstaking work among the workers and peasants, experience has proved, brings the ideas of socialism to the masses. But we cannot say that most of the population is involved in solving the Party's practical problems. Even today, in working to bring to reality one or another provision of our programme, we encounter resistance in individual areas from diverse sections of the population. And the Diavarra putsch made it clear enough that not everything is well even within the Party. There is still an ideological struggle in the mass organisations, among revolutionary activists and even Party members on practical issues, and many problems are decided in the course of discussion. We believe this is normal for such a young Party as ours.

'We can safely say that the tasks of each mass organisation have now been clearly defined and the job is to give them a more active part in resolving the problems facing the Party and the country. That will have to be accomplished within the next two or three years.

'Living standards are still low and it will take at least four, even five years to achieve a tangible improvement. This will require an intensive effort and the overcoming of serious economic differences particularly in planning. The fact is that we have no planning tech-

nique, nor mechanism nor planning agency, nor even a planning policy. Policy is mapped out by the Party Central Committee. Apparently we shall have to set up a planning mechanism, at first in conjunction with the Central Committee. Planning will probably be easier when People's Councils, the local government organs, will be operating throughout the country. So far we have been conducting planning seminars and in March and April we will hold a theoretical conference on planning.

'And so, the Second Congress will firmly establish the Party and finalise its organisational structure. It will be a Congress of the mustering of our forces.'

'Building socialism in Africa', Pierre Nze said, 'is not easy. There are few real Communists and so far the Communist and Workers' movement has not achieved much in Africa. Many leaders of the national liberation struggle have a very hazy idea of the future. But millions look for positive answers. Can we Marxist-Leninists ignore how our work is likely to influence other Africans? Can we simply draw on the experience accumulated in other African countries, Somalia, say, Guinea or Mali? Our Party is convinced that if it achieves its aims in the Congo this will have a tremendous revolutionary impact on the whole of Africa where, we know, our experience is being closely followed, and that gives us fresh strength.'

Brazzaville-Prague

Comintern aid for Black Revolutionaries

by F. Meli

'I believe that communists have always played an active role in the fight by colonial countries for their freedom, because the short-term objects of communism would always correspond with the long-term objects of freedom movements.' (Nelson Mandela: 'I am Prepared to Die'.*)*

If there is any field of research neglected by historians, it is the mutual relationship between the Comintern and African or rather Black revolutionaries. This has led a number of bourgeois historians to come so the superficial and absurd conclusion that the Comintern did nothing for Africa except to deplore the absence of Communist Parties! Some even use racialistic 'arguments' to explain this: the problems which faced the Comintern were aggravated by the African's 'hatred of ideology', we are told.

The truth of the matter is that in Africa south of the Sahara there were in the inter-war period no great mass movements as, let us say, in Asia. The reasons for this are socio-economic and *not* racial. The absence of strong labour and national liberatory movements in sub-

Saharan Africa forced the Comintern to devise and adopt new tactics so as to activate *internal* forces in Africa.

The assistance given by the Comintern to the liberation movements in Africa, that is, in countries where the revolutionary forces were weak, was a matter of principle and was not motivated by egoistic self-seeking considerations. The essence of this policy was the implementation of proletarian internationalism in all the organs and sections of the Comintern.

In this article we are forced to deal only with the Comintern's policy towards 'Black Africa'. The main reasons are the concrete historic, geo-economic and ethno-linguistic tendencies of development which have resulted in the different trends of development in the history of our continent. Added to this is the fact that the Communist Parties in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia were sections of the Communist Party of France until 1936 (Algeria), 1937 (Tunisia), and 1943 (Morocco). The policy and tactics of the Comintern were as a result different from its policy towards, let us say, the Communist Party of South Africa, which was an independent party.

This brings us to another equally important aspect which always leads to confusion amongst historians, especially amongst those dealing with 'Black studies'. This is the problem of terminology. The term 'Negro Question' is confusing and misleading. The social and economic conditions of black people in Africa and America are different, so are the political aims, social forces, and hence ideological motivations. Besides, the term 'Negro' is no longer in use in progressive circles, largely because it has lost its original etymological meaning. But, in spite of all this, we are forced to use the term in this article because during the period under discussion it was generally accepted. The Comintern also approached the problems affecting the people of colour in America and Africa as a 'Negro question'. There was ample reason for that, as we shall show in this article.

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND AFRICA

The first world war (1914-18) had adverse repercussions on the international working-class and colonial peoples. It was not only fought for more colonies, but also with the help of colonial people. This made it

more urgent for the revolutionary internationalists to link the struggle of the international working-class with that of the colonial peoples. Lenin was the first to tackle this task. He made a thorough study of African reality, her peoples, and dealing with the size of different colonies, population, ethnic composition, etc.[1] The results of these studies were one of his major works, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism,* a book Michael Harmel has called 'the bible of the anti-colonial freedom fight.'[2]

The development of Leninist theory on the national and colonial question was closely connected with the struggle of the Bolsheviks, which found its climax in the creation of the first socialist state in the world. The victory of the October Revolution meant an end to the sole domination of imperialism in the world. For the first time in history, a class which had no interest in the oppression of other people came to power. The Soviet state was the first anti-imperialist and anti-colonial state of the world.

It solved the national question on the basis of fraternal solidarity of workers and peasant masses liberated from capital. The potentials and revolutionary traditions of formerly despised and enslaved people were invoked and developed. The Soviet state became a place of refuge for all 'the wretched of the earth'.

LENIN AND THE 'NEGRO QUESTION'

In 1919 the Comintern was formed in Moscow. Though there was no African representative in Moscow, the manifesto adopted at the Congress made reference to Africa:

> 'The liberation of the colonies is now possible with the emancipation of the working class of the metropolitan countries . . .
>
> 'Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia! The hour of proletarian dictatorship in Europe will also be your hour of liberation.'[3]

Also, the 'Conditions for Affiliation' adopted at the Second Congress in 1920 to serve as a programme and a binding document to be observed by all parties, declared:

> 'Every party which wishes to affiliate to the Third International, is duty-bound to expose ruthlessly the machinations of its imperialists in the colonies, not only in words but in deeds; to

demand the expulsion of their imperialists from these colonies; to arouse genuine fraternal feelings in the hearts of the workers of their countries for the toiling masses in the colonies and oppressed nations; to make a systematic agitation amongst the armed forces of its country against every form of oppression of colonial people.'[4]

This clear anti-colonial policy of the Comintern is a result of the realisation by the Comintern that victory over imperialism demands a united effort by all anti-imperialist forces against the common enemy. There is more to it. The goal of the working class, the socialist society, is diametrically opposed to any oppression of other nations and races.

At the Second Congress of the Comintern there was heated discussion on the national and colonial question. It is not the aim of this article to discuss the various trends, tendencies and content of these discussions. It is enough to record that Lenin was a moving spirit in these discussions. The 'Negro question' also featured prominently in these discussions. Claude MacKay, the revolutionary black American poet, has this to say on this point:

'Lenin himself grappled with the question of the American Negroes and spoke on the subject before the Second Congress of the Third International. He consulted with John Reed, the American journalist, and dwelt on the urgent necessity of propaganda and organisation work among the Negroes of the South.'[5]

Sen Katayama, the Japanese communist and one of the leading personalities of the Comintern, who actively participated in the discussions of the 'Negro commissions' of the Comintern, confirms:

'At the Second Congress the Negro question was handled by Comrade Lenin and the American delegates. Comrade Lenin viewed the American Negroes as an oppressed nation and put them in the same category as Ireland.

'At the Second Congress, the American Party received instructions to check the possibility of calling a Negro congress in America and then a world congress of Negroes . . .'[6]

This Leninist approach to this question is interesting and of great practical political significance. Lenin's call for a 'world congress of Negroes' was far from being motivated by superficial expressions of sentimentality on the relations between the Afro-Americans and

Africans. He knew better than anybody else that the conditions of the two peoples are different. While the Afro-Americans were faced with problems of a social nature resulting from an unsolved national question, the Africans were suffering from colonial domination. As early as 1916 he differentiated in Africa south of the Sahara between Abyssinia and Liberia on the one side, which he consciously put in inverted commas as "semi-colonies", and the remaining subcontinent, which he described as: '. . . all the rest in Africa = colonies'.[7]

THE AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD

In the early twenties there emerged in the United States a revolutionary black organisation – The African Blood Brotherhood. This organisation showed a great interest in and concern for the fate and future of Africa. It drafted a programme for the liberation of Africa which was reproduced in *The Communist Review* – the organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain. This programme has interesting things to say about the attitude of the Soviet state towards Africa:

> '. . . that the important thing about Soviet Russia, for example, is not the merits or demerits of the Soviet form of Government, but the outstanding fact that Soviet Russia is opposing the imperialist robbers who have partitioned our motherland [that is, Africa] and subjugated our kindred, and that Soviet Russia is feared by those imperialist nations . . .'[8]

It went further to demand the building of 'Negro organisations in each of the African countries into a world-wide Negro Federation'.[9]

About the Comintern the Programme of the African Blood Brotherhood states:

> 'The revolutionary element which is undermining the imperialist powers that oppress us must be given every encouragement by Negroes who really seek liberation. This element is led and represented by the Third International, which has its sections in all countries. We should immediately establish contact with the Third International and its millions of followers in all countries of the world.'[10]

This demand to establish contacts with the Comintern was realised in the late 20's and early 30's, when some of the leaders of the African

Blood Brotherhood played an important role in the League Against Imperialism and the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers of the Red International of Labour Unions and its organ, *The Negro Worker.* We have in mind Otto Huiswood, Richard B. Moore and Cyril Briggs.

The African Blood Brotherhood was a relatively small organisation. Even its programme, revolutionary as it was, was not without flaws and mistakes in regard to the assessment of African reality or choice of methods in as far as achievement of African independence was concerned. But its significance lies in the fact that it strove *to combine the struggle for black liberation with the worldwide struggle for the emancipation of the working class.*

D.I. JONES AND THE 'NEGRO QUESTION'

It was at the Third Congress of the Comintern in 1921 that D.I. Jones, the head of the South African delegation comprising Sam Barlin and himself, gave a report on 'Communism in South Africa'. (It should be remembered that the South African socialists affiliated to the Comintern at the Second Congress in 1920.) In the report, Jones dealt with the problems affecting Africa and demanded that the Comintern pay more attention to African problems. He stressed the special significance of South Africa for winning the Africans from the interior to the Comintern because, as he said, 'Johannesburg is the industrial university of the African native . . .'[11] In an article in *Moscow,* the organ of the Third Congress of the Comintern, he stated with characteristic bravery that communism has a bright perspective in Africa, and showed the dialectical interconnection between the struggle of the working-class in the metropolitan countries and that of the colonial countries. As a result of this initiative by Jones, the Third Congress of the Comintern made the following recommendation:

> 'There is also a suggestion by the South African delegation, that the Executive should regard the Negro question or the proletarian movement among the Negroes as an important aspect of the Orient question. The presidium suggests also that this matter be handed over to the Executive for further attention.'[12]

Although this question was not discussed at the Third Congress of

the Comintern,* the historic merit of D.I. Jones is that he, as the first African communist to be present at such an international congress, demanded that the communists of the world should regard the 'Negro question' as an equally important aspect of the colonial question.

D.I. Jones later represented South Africa in the Comintern's Executive. He was involved in the general administrative work of the Comintern; advised the CP of South Africa on general tactical questions and policy of the Comintern; wrote articles on Soviet Russia in the *International* – the organ of the Communist Party of South Africa – and on the South African situation in the various papers and publications of the international working class movement and trade unions. Considering that Jones was a sick man, he led a busy life – the life of a man who understood how to combine socialist patriotism with proletarian internationalism.

An important role in the strengthening of ties and contact between the proletarian movement in South Africa and the Comintern was played by the South African communist youth movement – the Young Communist League. In 1922, the Young Communist League (YCL) affiliated to the Communist Youth International (CYI), whose seat was in Berlin. From the end of 1922 to May 1924, the problems confronting the South African youth were discussed nine times by the Communist Youth International. The contacts were good. Small wonder that the Communist Youth International stated in 1924:

> '. . . our association in distant Africa is an honourable section of the worldwide communist youth.'[14]

The Communist Youth International was instrumental in solving the difficult question of whether to form one single organisation or parallel organisations for black and white South African youth – a question which could not be solved by the first annual conference of the Young Communist League of South Africa in 1924. The Communist Youth International decided for a single organisation.[15] By so doing, the Communist Youth International helped to strengthen the internationalist forces within the communist youth movement of South Africa.

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern took place in Moscow in 1922. At the Congress a 'Negro Commission' was formed and the American members of the commission were elected to be the convenors. The

* At this point the author would like to correct his earlier contention that the 'Negro question' was discussed at the Third Congress of the Comintern.[13]

commission was international in its composition: Americans, a Russian, a Frenchman, a Dutchman, an Englishman, an Indonesian, and a South African (S.P. Bunting). Mrs Rebecca Bunting could not attend the Congress because she fell ill in Moscow.

Billings (alias Otto Huiswood) and Claude MacKay (both Afro-Americans) delivered speeches on the 'negro question' at the Congress. Billings became a rapporteur for the commission, but his report could not be accepted by the Congress because he over-emphasised the 'psychological factors of the negro question' and the 'special mental characteristics of the negro'. The report was then, after re-discussion by the commission, given by Sascha (pseudonym), an American. The report noted the awakening 'race consciousness'* amongst the black people all over the world; stressed the objectively anti-capitalist character of the struggle of the black masses. Sascha went on to say:

> 'It is the duty of the Communist International to make the negroes aware of the fact that they are not the only people who are suffering under imperialist and capitalist oppression, that the workers and peasants of Europe, Asia and America are also victims of the imperialist exploiters, that in India and China, in Persia and Turkey, in Egypt and Morocco, the oppressed coloured people are fighting heroically against imperialist exploiters; that these people are striving against the same miseries with which the negroes are faced – racial discrimination, social and economic inequality, and intensive industrial exploitation; that these people are fighting for the same goals as the Negroes – political, economic and social emancipation and equal rights.'[16]

The Commission adopted a resolution on the 'negro question'. This resolution was regarded as an attempt to apply Lenin's thesis on the national and colonial question to the 'negro question'. This seems to us a bit problematic, because in America the problem was not a colonial one. A closer study of the resolution reveals that the 'negro question' at the Fourth Congress was viewed from an American point

* The term 'race consciousness' was then widely used and is in a sense a forerunner of what is today in South Africa known as 'black consciousness'. It means a consciousness and assertion of national pride, self-respect and dignity amongst the black people. It is a realisation of their past and present achievements, and what is more, their capability to change the present and shape the future. It is therefore an anti-racial consciousness.

of view. It is true that such demands as equality between blacks and whites; equal wages; political, social, and trade union rights, were relevant to South Africa, but needed more elaboration in tropical Africa, where colonialism took the form and played the role of an armed occupant with a governor and a few 'civil servants' in the capital.

In spite of the above, the whole discussion on the 'negro question' at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern was fruitful and in many ways a step forward.

The Comintern's stand on this question can be summarised as follows: The Comintern rejected capitalism as a social theory for the solution of African problems. It accepted class and national struggle as a means to achieve national and social emancipation of the black workers. This was at the same time an expression of the faith and confidence the Comintern had in the power and potential of the black workers who had been enslaved and despised for centuries.

The Comintern was also interested in overcoming the reformism which was strong in the Pan African movement. This should be viewed in conjunction with the fact that in the 20s there was a strong 'zionist', that is, messianic, movement of the Afro-Americans, the 'Universal Negro Improvement Association', led by Marcus Garvey, the 'black Moses'. This organisation, which grew into a mass movement, could have been successful if it had not involved itself in various commercial ventures of a capitalist nature, which proved to be a failure. Garvey replaced class struggles with 'race struggle': the enemy of a black man is a white man. He divorced racism from its economic roots. His organisation was then easily manipulated by agents of the ruling class and became no threat to the status quo. The motto 'Back to Africa' could not contribute to the betterment and improvement of the lot of the black Americans. On the contrary, it led to passivity. Objectively the slogan was no programme for the liberation of Africa, but a means to her further enslavement, especially when Garvey became a spokesman for 'black capitalism'.[17]

It would be wrong to think that 'black capitalism' was propagated only by Garveyists. W.E.B. DuBois, with his characteristic honesty, has this to say about these elements in the Pan African movement in 1921:

> 'A secretariat was set up in Paris and functioned for a couple of years, but it was not successful. Just as the Garvey movement

made its thesis industrial cooperation, so the new young secretary of the Pan Africa movement, a coloured Paris public school teacher, wanted to combine investment and profit with the idea of Pan Africa. He wanted American Negro capital for this end. We had other ideas.'[18]

The Comintern also took into consideration the deep underlying sentiments for Africa amongst the black Americans (or the other way round) by including in the resolution of the Fourth Congress a clause calling for 'a general Negro congress or a general Negro conference'. These sentiments are rooted in the common confrontation of the two peoples with racism and imperialism. They are not motivated by 'blackness'. Ahmed Sekou Toure, the President of the Republic of Guinea, had this in mind when, in a 40-minute message to the Sixth Pan African Congress in Dar es Salaam (19th-26th June, 1974), he pointed out that Fidel Castro and Salvador Allende were 'much more brothers' than some African and Afro-American leaders who betrayed the masses.[19]

The Fourth Congress had also an educative duty, that is, to educate the black and white workers in a spirit of internationalism and save them from a fanatical nationalism or chauvinism, which is in actual fact suicidal for both black and white people. At the Congress, Bunting read a resolution in support of the white mine workers' strike in Johannesburg. At the same time, the Comintern stressed that support for the struggle of the black people against national oppression is also in the interest of the white toiling masses. That is why the Congress declared that the Comintern:

'. . . which . . . is also the organisation of the oppressed black people of the world, considers it its duty to support and encourage the international organisation of the negroes in their struggle against the common enemy.'[20]

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern strengthened the contacts with the CP of South Africa. Bill Andrews represented the CP of South Africa at the Executive of the Comintern from 1922 to 1923. The discussions at the Congress had a worldwide echo in the international press of the working class. Also the Third Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) in 1924 devoted part of its discussion to the 'Negro question'. Among its speakers were Losowski and Kosolew (both Soviet Union), Wilson (England), Tim Buck

(Canada), Kutscher and Dunne (both USA). The sharp differences of opinion on this question were ironed out in the course of the Congress.[21]

In South Africa, the discussion was taken up by *The International.* The party organ published the reports and contributions of Claude MacKay, Billings and Sascha. S.P. Bunting, reporting from Moscow about the Congress, wrote:

> 'The American Negroes for their part have two representatives here: one, an unofficial visitor, is Claude MacKay, a negro journalist who has written some fine revolutionary poems, some of which have been published in *The International.* He was the first negro to enter Russia since the Revolution. It is good to find his views on "black and white" problems agreeing in the main with ours.'[22]

CONCLUSION

The role played by the early pioneers of socialism in South Africa in propagating the cause of African freedom cannot be over-estimated. These were men like D.I. Jones, S.P. Bunting, and W.H. Andrews, who, at the rostrums of the international communist movement, talked the language of African independence. Indeed, Jones and Bunting were the first, if not the only, African revolutionaries to meet Lenin. Busy as he was as head of state, Lenin found time to read a paper Bunting had written on 'Colonial Questions' for the *Nouvel Orient* magazine.[23]

In its five years of existence, the Comintern did all it could to clarify itself and the black peoples of the world about the nature and character and also the historical place of the struggle of the black people. This struggle could only be fought successfully in conjunction with the struggle of the oppressed peoples of the world against the common enemy, which is international imperialism, colonialism and racism.

There were difficult organisational problems to be solved – the most pressing being the difficulty of having direct contacts with the African people who were deliberately cut off by the colonial powers from the progressive world. With the exception of South Africa (and to a lesser degree of Mozambique, where there was a socialist move-

ment amongst the Portuguese workers*), there were in Africa south of the Sahara no social movements which the Comintern could have direct contacts with. The reasons for the absence of such movements were socio-economic. The Comintern felt that one of the ways to contact Africans was via Black America – that is, revolutionary Black America. This was, considering the times, justifiable. Of course, today conditions are different. The African people are making their own history and shaping their own destinies without having to ask permission from a colonial power. They are aware of the fact that this is a result of the support rendered their struggle by the revolutionary forces all over the world whose nucleus in the inter-war period was the Comintern.

* In 1920 the Comintern press reported that a group of the Portuguese Socialist Party – the forerunner of the Portuguese CP – was making revolutionary propaganda and agitation in the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. These socialists published a weekly, *O'Emancipador.* The weekly propagated the need for the mobilisation of the Africans, the Comintern reported. In 1928, at the 6th Congress of the Comintern, Jones, a US delegate, reported that a group of revolutionary Mozambican socialists wrote to the American Negro Labour Congress and asked to be put in touch with the Comintern. Unfortunately, the Comintern rejected this group on the grounds that it was not known to it.[24]

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BOOK REVIEWS

POETRY AND LIBERATION

Yakhal'inkomo by Wally Mongane Serote, Renoster Books, 1972
Tsetlo by Wally Mongane Serote, Ad. Donker, 1974
To Whom it may Concern edited by Robert Roysten, Ad. Donker, 1974

Throughout the history of organised social life poetry has proved a powerful instrument for giving voice to popular cultural traditions; it has also served during times of national repression to express the feelings and illuminate the political goals of oppressed peoples. The poems of Hikmet, Mayakovsky, Neruda, Lorca and Brecht are among this century's supreme examples of how poetry can help both to stimulate and to sustain the hopes and struggles of millions of people for a better life. More recently the poets of the Palestinian and Vietnamese people and, in Africa, the poets of the Portuguese colonies, have demonstrated the importance of poetry in helping to inspire (as well as to project) struggles for national liberation. In South Africa too, poetry is beginning to fulfil its true social function. Muzzled for decades the voice of freedom is now bursting out of the prison of apartheid tyranny.

The immediacy and the economy of form and content inherent in poetry make it an ideal vehicle for conveying socially progressive ideas where other art forms, because of their innate complexity and problems of production, are more easily frustrated by fascist restrictions on popular expression. Poetry is a simple but effective mode of communication. On a scrap of paper or memorised, a poem can reach the hearts and minds of thousands without need of elaborate preparation and display and without much, if any, evidence of physical existence. To describe its simplicity is not to underrate the poet's task; poetry comes to him no easier than a picture to a painter or drama to a playwright. As probably the most exacting of the arts, poetry taxes creativity to the full: the poet must distil the essence of his idea into the tiniest of vessels and yet that vessel must speak of oceans if it is to communicate feelings which help make sense of our experience of life and point a way to the future.

To achieve this for his poetry, the poet must have his ear to the heartbeat of life, his heart with the interests of his people and sufficient power over words to organise and translate his perception and intuition into an original, lucid and socially significant creation. A cornerstone of most, if not all, great poetry has been the poet's ability to breach the walls of his own ego and unite his emotions with those of the human collective. And in our fast changing technological age if the poet's humanistic urges can be organised and disciplined within a framework welded by a scientific understanding of socio-historical processes, then he will be less likely to succumb to the temptations of subjectivity and instead find in life a constant and sympathetic refrain to his work.

But poets are not born to a prescription, they are made, and the circumstances of their making are not to order. Great social upheavals are often the necessary catalyst to a poet's emergence. Many of the most famous poets only found their voices in times of social crisis and transformation.

AN EXPLOSION

The 1970's in South Africa have been witness to an explosion of black socially conscious poetry unparalleled in the history of literature of our country. The great dam isolating the life-giving waters of national spirit and cultural identity, ruthlessly contained by the engineers of apar-

theid and topped up to high water mark in the 1960's by the banning of most leading anti-racist writers, is beginning to spill over. The overflow is now in full spate, for the moment gushing aimlessly and barely damping the parched earth in its path. Although this early turbulence is to be expected it is not wasted as it prepares the ground for more concentrated and purposeful irrigation. The resurgence of militancy among South Africa's black workers and the increasing activity and influence of the liberation movement will in time harness this outpouring to the dynamo of the South African revolution. In order to keep pace with the needs of their people, South African poets will come increasingly to identify their work with our struggle.

It is against this backdrop and in the spotlight of these needs that we should evaluate three recent collections of black poetry published in South Africa.

Mongane Wally Serote is one of the most prominent and certainly, if one is to judge from published work, the most productive of the new wave of black South African poets. Thirty years old, born in Sophiatown, he published his first book of poems *Yakhal'inkomo* with Renoster Books in 1972. The collection did not enjoy anything of the same success as Oswald Mtshali's *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum* (reviewed in issue No.48 of this journal), which sold like hot-cakes in a predominantly white market. Where Mtshali's mildly provocative irony struck a sympathetic chord in the liberal white conscience, Serote's caustic and personally complex vision did not find much empathy. Although this response is not without significance it is hardly a true measure of the quality of either poet who can only be adequately judged by their impact on their own people, and by the journals which reflect the interests of the masses in South Africa.

Little is known about Serote beyond the postcard description on the jacket of his book. The description, which captions an intense and brooding photograph of the author, could be an extract from his passbook, briefly recording his movements from birth, through schooling, to a period of detention under the Terrorism Act in June 1969, from which 'he was released 9 months later without being charged'. Serote's poems help to tell us a little more about him. Because of an overwhelming self-involvement, Serote's personality, his frustrated ambitions, the amorphous quality of his individuality struggling for definition, dominate the subject matter of most of his poems:

My wishes are the flames
On my life, the wax
That slowly melts
As they burn . . .

The apparently unbridgeable chasm between his existence and his expectations from life is here as in others of his poems, astringently manifested. While Mtshali is able to externalise his frustrations and identify them, albeit lightly and teasingly, with the life experience of his people, Serote is too subjective and too acerbic to depersonalise his vision:

My eye-lids fall heavy like clouds over the sun,
And often I catch myself pulling the blades of my beard
Unaware of those who come into the room,
Unaware of the trees, the sky, of colour or the sunlight
I feel so cold towards life . . .

or:

. . . Words,
WORDS
Like thought, are elusive,
Like life,
Where everybody is trapped.
I wonder who trapped me,
For I am trapped,
Twice,
Like,
a word can mean two things,
Who. and Whitey
Trapped me.
I read.
Words,
WORDS
trying to get out
Words. Words. By Whitey.
No. No. No. By Whitey.
I know I'm trapped.
Helpless
Hopeless . . .

This estrangement of the individual consciousness and purpose from the life and aspirations of the collective is a well-established phenomenon of capitalist industrial society. Nowhere is it more clearly illustrated than in South Africa where a whole people have been deliberately and brutally amputated from their national and cultural roots. Serote's self analysis however, does take on a wider identity and significance in the context of South Africa where alienation embraces the real life experience of millions. But poems which universalise an awareness of individual frustration and deprivation, however perceptively, serve only to entrench despair and tranquilise hope, unless at the same time the corresponding reality created by the forces for social change features as part of the poem's perspective. People may be moved to sadness by Serote's poignant revelations but rarely to anger or hope, which are the emotions essential to motivate the fight for a better life.

Serote does occasionally, if hesitatingly, venture across the arbitrary border enclosing and isolating his persecuted individuality. When he does his poems cease to be just eloquent mirrors to the agony of his soul and begin also to reflect and act upon the dynamic reality of South Africa:

. . . I'm learning to pronounce this 'Shit' well,
Since the other day,
At the pass office,
When I went to get employment,
The officer there endorsed me to Middelburg,
So I said, hard and with all my might, 'Shit!'
I felt a little better;
But what's good is I said it in his face,
A thing my father wouldn't dare do.
That's what's in this black 'Shit'.

or:

. . . My brothers in the streets,
Who holiday in jails,
Who rest in hospitals,
Who smile at insults,
Who fear the whites,
Oh you black boys . . .
Who booze and listen to records,

Who've tasted rape of mothers and sisters,
Who take alms from white hands,
Who grab bread from black mouths,
Oh you black boys,
Who spill blood as easy as saying 'Voetsek'
Listen!
Come my black brothers in the streets,
Listen,
It's black women who are crying.

But these passages are not characteristic of the collection. In most cases his work is entirely, and for a poet of his promise, depressingly apposite to the chosen title of the volume: Serote himself explains Yakhal'inkomo as 'the cry of cattle at the slaughter house' which is hardly a theme to inspire hope in the oppressed of South Africa.

The publication of his second collection, *Tsetlo*, in 1974 confirmed the originality and restless energy of Serote's work – for these qualities alone he is well worth reading – but it also consolidated the negative introspective tendencies which dominate the first volume:

. . . everything is broken
even people don't look anymore,
their eyes are broken; and empty; and shut,
everybody's back is facing the future
somebody – please, say a prayer

Under the title 'Political Vision of a Poet' we are asked by a reviewer in the *Rand Daily Mail* that *Tsetlo* be 'urgently studied by all who deal with the social present and the political future of this land'. To concede this degree of deference to any black voice in South Africa, let alone a poetic one, is on one level quite a testimony to the growing impact of black nationalism; it is also a rare and welcome concession to the social didactic role of poetry. But more significantly, if white South Africans are being advised by their press to read and consider this poet with such urgency, then we must seriously consider the possibility that it might well accord with their own sectarian interests to do so.

It is Serote's 'political vision' or, to be more precise, his lack of political vision that is at issue here and that is so attractive to white liberals. Consciously or unconsciously (and it really does not matter which when evaluating his writing), Serote is moving into an area where his work might easily be exploited by the forces of reformism in South

Africa who would prefer to renovate and spring-clean the cracked and evil smelling edifice of white rule rather than have it demolished completely. Serote's 'emotional burden' the *Rand Daily Mail* reviewer observes, 'is neither guilt nor anger . . . but a profoundly humane grief'. Serote, he argues, 'shows from his own observations of black lives misshapen by deprivation, humiliation and violence, what is in our situation that could – perhaps must – eventually erupt in actions... but he does not gloss over the fact that such actions would be atrocities, as destructive of the doer's spirit as of the victim's flesh'.

There is no doubt that Serote's nihilistic urges project a distorted and one-sided picture of reality not dissimilar from that deduced by – and applauded by – the *Rand Daily Mail* reviewer, but the deep sincerity and humanity underlying Serote's work, albeit heavily veneered with his own bitterness and confusion, compels the belief that this highly sensitive and gifted poet is still to discover and reveal his true voice. His desperate search for identity allows us to hope that his isolation from the reality of the struggle of our people is temporary and that along with millions of his brothers he will very soon raise himself, and his poetry, out of the sterility of despair and march in step with our liberation movement. When that time comes Serote will be guided, we are sure, by the moving message contained in these lines of his own:

I do not know where I have been,
But Brother,
I know I'm coming.
I do not know where I have been,
But Brother,
I know I heard the call.
Hell! where I was I cried silently
Yet I sat there until now.
I do not know where I have been,
But Brother,
I know I'm coming . . .

The complete version of this poem, together with 9 others by Serote, is included in *To Whom it may Concern* which is the first anthology to be published in South Africa drawn entirely from the work of the new wave of young black poets. The 12 poets featured in this collection are unevenly represented: Serote, Mtshali and M. Pascal

Gwana account for 50 percent of the contents, and as we are given no editorial explanation to account for this gross disparity we must assume that the remaining poets have not produced sufficient work to merit more space. Had they enjoyed anything like the same opportunities as their white counterparts there is little doubt they would have been more productive. But it is clear that in the absence of those opportunities, such as normal publication outlets and the promise and stimulus of a prospective audience, the incentive to write must come entirely from the poet's own resources, preoccupied as he must be with the daily strain of keeping alive and whole in apartheid society. In this sense there is some truth in the editor's characterisation of the poetry of his contributors as 'a form of psychological self-preservation' but when Roysten goes on to explain that the poems are a declaration of the writers' intention to 'remain human, alive and free in the face of whatever destructive forces outside reality might be aiming at them', then we must take issue with Roysten's view of poetry and with his criteria in selecting material for this anthology.

Apart from his rather one-sided existentialist outlook on the South African reality it appears that Roysten sees no role for the black poet in South Africa except as a passive observer of life, exercising his free will (on an empty stomach) and motivated, not by a desire to bring an end to racist tyranny, but by the implacable demands of 'psychological self-preservation'. It is in this way, Roysten believes, that these poets can 'reveal' through their writing 'a self that feels confident to order its world and its experiences as it thinks best'. This dictum, Roysten contends, 'is not limited to writers but is part of a general and promising spirit in the country'! If the 'self' revealed by these poets is concerned mainly with self-preservation, what hope is there then for South Africa's enslaved masses? Must they all seek salvation in the secret recesses of their own insulated egos? If the only freedom to look forward to is a freedom to retreat from the 'destructive forces' of 'outside reality', then the sort of poetry advocated by Roysten is a poetry of despair and surrender which we can well do without.

The editor has not bothered to tell us anything about his twelve contributors nor, indeed, about the provenance of the poems he has selected. This shabby treatment of his poets could be tolerated only in South Africa where race and colour have always been a convenient and sufficient substitute for real information about our people.

By and large the poems selected by Roysten are in accord with his narrow aestheticism but here and there, throughout the collection, the mould he imposes is too crude and brittle to contain the complex and volatile material it encloses. Of the twelve poets Mandlenkosi Langa, represented by just two pieces, best exemplifies the proud and bravely defiant spirit of our people:

I lead her in,
A sepia figure 100 years old.
Blue ice chips gaze
And a red slash gapes:
'What does she want?'
I translate: 'Pension, sir.'
'Useless kaffir crone,
Lazy as the black devil.
She'll get fuck-all.'
I translate.
'My man toiled
And rendered himself impotent
With hard labour.
He paid tax like you.
I am old enough to get pension.
I was born before the great wars
And saw my father slit your likes' throats!'
I don't translate, but
She loses her pension anyhow.

Here is a gifted poet. Here is a voice in harmony with that of his people. Unlike his editor, Mandlenkosi Langa is in no doubt about the identity of those 'To whom it may concern'.

Scarlet Whitman

THE TWO FACES OF AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE

Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan, by Mohamed Omer Beshir, Rex Collings, £4.50, paperback, £2.75
Africa Emergent, by John Hatch, Secker and Warburg, £3.75

A decade and longer after the transition to independent government in Africa the pre-occupation with the outward forms of government and political institutions rather than their social and economic content

– reflecting the social relations of production – is at last beginning to wear thinner. The evidence is found in the stream of studies which produce not only critiques of conventional political science but which analyse the distinctive social and political structures created by the impact of international capitalism on African economies and societies. (A running listing of this work, in the shape of books and periodical articles, appears in *Radical Africana,* issued as a supplement to the new journal *Review of Radical Political Economy*.)

These two books are not by any means characteristic of the radical let alone Marxist strain of analysis; if anything they demonstrate the pitfalls of conventional analysis even as they try to repair its deficiencies.

Mohamed Omer Beshir's book begins with the Sudan a century before independence, and contains some useful new archival material on revolts against conquest, making the convincing point in the chapter on early rebellions that the continuity of political activity helps explain the vitality of political life in the Sudan. The book gets interesting on the more contemporary period from about page 185, with a fuller than usual account of the origins of the labour movement, early trade unions and strikes and the growth and role of the Communist Party. For once the religious sects and traditional political parties do not dominate the field to the total exclusion of popular forces and the mass movement oriented to the Left. But it is narrative rather than analysis, and essentially the book remains true to the convention that the study of politics and government can be reduced to 'the struggle for power', as though all forces within any social conflict agree on the prize and the rules of the game and are equivalent in their purposes.

It is because no attempt is made to examine the social basis of successive governments that the paragraphs – admittedly last-minute additions but revealing nonetheless – which claim that General Nimeiry's regime marks 'a real break with the past' and 'a decisive shift in political and economic power', are dubious not only as evidence of political judgement, which is bad enough, but even within the context of the book. For any study which seeks to explain not the ephemeral expression of political power but its sources can surely not afford a docile acceptance of political claims (Nimeiry's proclamation of socialism) without testing it against the evidence (the destruction of the Left in the white terror of mid-1971, the resurrection of free

enterprise, and the open-door foreign investment policy).

The writer makes a substantial point about the influence on the Sudan of Egyptian political forms. He might then have moved in closer to compare, within these political forms, the pattern of events. First, government by bourgeois/petit-bourgeois interests in a setting which accommodated foreign control of the economy; then army take-overs a la Nasser and Nimeiry which asserted military-bureaucratic interests through their control of enlarged public sectors; finally the evidence that this phase and its state-directed political controls proved to be preliminary to the re-assertion of indigenous private capital, inviting the renewed subservience of these economies to foreign capital. In this setting Nimeiry's policies are anything but a sharp break with the past.

John Hatch has made use of some of the new material on Africa, though he has attempted the kind of overview of the entire continent which makes a rigorous analysis of a score of disparate economies difficult if not impossible. He drives home the dangers of treating political forms as disembodied from economic, and some of his best sections draw on comparisons of the development strategies of the Ivory Coast (capitalism for the French and French-trained elite) and Tanzania (self-reliance for domestic capital accumulation).

Rather this book as an introduction to Africa than some of the superficial euphoric accounts that treated African Nationalist politics as a clean-cut thrust towards some idyllic state of liberation, when all problems are resolved once the outward signs of empire have gone. Hatch reproduces most of the reservations to this perspective: the strategies of multi-national corporations and their use of Africa for tax-dodging, labour-cost saving, re-routing capital; some of the limits to nationalisation (though his failure to grapple with the nature of the post-colonial state and class formation makes his assessment rather partial); the rise of privileged African groups asserting domestic vested interests and the consequences for the continent's continued dependency.

Yet perhaps because of its encyclopaedic sweep across the continent, but more still because of its reliance on a wide but eclectic range of sources, side by side with unexceptionable conclusions in this book there are obscure and mystifying statements (African society . . . 'as a common entity composed of hundreds of group personalities'); some confused treatment of notions such as tribalism; and some marked

inconsistencies, such as the treatment of Kenyatta as the architect of political harmony whereas his counterparts in other countries are rightly indicted for the private and divisive interests they assert. One gets the impression that some of the seminal concepts Hatch has identified and here usefully reproduces for more general consumption have not percolated deep down in the handling of his material. In places this leads him to join Mohamed Omer Beshir in a projection of change as a result of different political *institutions* (distinct from changed social formations and the assertion of distinct class alignments?) as the focus of Africa's indispensable solution. And the absorption with institutions and important personalities tends to leave the continent blank of social movements and social action; even their relative weakness or inanimation needs to be stated, and explained.

H.R.

STUDIES IN DISTORTION

Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1973, edited by Richard F. Staar; and *World Communism: A Handbook 1918-1965,* edited by Witold S. Sworakowski; both published by the Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, California; 25 dollars each.

The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, founded at Stanford University in 1919 by President Herbert Hoover, describes itself as 'a center for advanced study and research on public and international affairs in the twentieth century'. If the two volumes under review are typical of its work, one can only say that its research is neither advanced nor objective, and its main aim would appear to be to arm the anti-communist forces throughout the world with ideological ammunition in the cold war. The editors excuse themselves in advance by stressing that 'the views expressed in its publications are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Hoover Institution'. However, certain underlying assumptions are repeated so frequently by the various contributors that the Hoover

Institution cannot escape association with them. One is that communism and communists are by definition bad, and that association with them is also bad. Thus people and organisations are pronounced guilty of promoting the interests of communism simply because they associate with Communists or include communists among their membership.

In 'World Communism', for example, Lewis H. Gann, who contributes a section on South Africa, writes: 'Throughout the 1950s the communists had been anxious to conceal their connection with the Congress Alliance and similar bodies, but in 1960 they began to claim extensive successes and devote much attention to propaganda. They also intensified their hold over the clandestine cadres of the African National Congress'. Of the precise meaning of this garbled nonsense we are not quite certain, but the intention is apparently to brand the ANC as a communist front organisation – an hypothesis for which it is evidently considered unnecessary to furnish any evidence.

The author of this section is described as 'Senior Fellow and Deputy Curator of African Collection, Hoover Institution'. An imposing title. But where, pray, did he collect this prize piece of misinformation: 'South African communists subsequently (ie subsequent to the formation of the Pan-Africanist Congress in 1959) formed the Socialist League of Africa. In the early 1960s this body published *Spark,* which followed the orthodox communist line of condemning American, British and West German "neo-colonialism" and supporting Soviet policy'?

And who told him that Goven Mbeki was an African lecturer? Or that Brian Bunting had been convicted and fined or jailed after the African mineworkers' strike in 1946? Or that Moses Kotane had at any time been expelled from the Communist Party? Or that Bill Andrews came from Leicester? The list of errors, both serious and trivial, is no great advertisement for the 'advanced research' on which the Hoover Institution claims to base its publications.

Lewis Gann is also the author of the section on South Africa in the *1973 Yearbook,* and here he is even more reckless with the truth. 'The SACP and its allied organisations – the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Indian Congress (IC), and the South African Coloured People's Congress (CPC) – are banned by the government', he writes, thus combining a monumental smear and three monumental errors in a single short sentence: the Congresses are not 'allied' to the

SACP, and neither the Indian Congress nor the Coloured People's Congress is banned.

Not satisfied with linking up the Congress movement with the Communist Party in this way, Mr Gann (or is it Dr Gann or Professor Gann?) then spreads his net a little wider, bringing into the field also the whole Anti-Apartheid Movement, whose views 'on South African and international questions', he says, 'essentially reflect those of the ANC'; and this evidently entitles him to include 'Anti-Apartheid News' in the list of publications which must be regarded as suspect by all good anti-communists.

The smear tactics of the Hoover Institution's academics and officials should be familiar to us, because they are precisely the same as those employed by the Nationalist Government, which wields a Suppression of Communism Act impartially against communists, liberals, clerics and many other categories of opponents on the simple ground that anyone who opposes apartheid is furthering the aims of communism. And indeed, if we look through the list of Hoover Institution 'fellows' and contributors, we come across some who have appeared on the platforms of our own South African Inter-Church Anti-Communist Action Committee headed for many years by Dr J.D. Vorster, actuary and later moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church and brother of Premier B.J. Vorster.

Birds of a feather flock together. Even vultures.

Z.N.

A MARXIST VIEW OF AFRICAN HISTORY

The History of Black Africa, Volumes 3 and 4, by Endre Sik, published by Akademiai Kiado, Budapest

The Hungarian Marxist Endre Sik published the first two volumes of this comprehensive history of Africa in 1966 (reviewed in the *African Communist,* No.25 Second Quarter 1966 and No.28 First Quarter 1967). In those two volumes the author dealt with the history of the various African countries up to the outbreak of World War II. The third and fourth volumes deal with the period of World War II and the

post-war period of decolonisation in which most African nations gained their political independence.

The title of Sik's monumental work is perhaps misleading: his survey includes the white dominated countries of Southern Africa and the Portuguese colonies, but excludes Arab Africa with the exception of the Sudan (which is not, of course, exclusively Arab).

There can be no doubting the overall significance of Sik's work, which presents one of the most detailed studies of African history from a Marxist point of view to emerge from the socialist countries. There have been other histories, notably those published by the Institute of Africa of the USSR Academy of Sciences. But whereas the Soviet studies are the work of many hands, Sik's study represents the considered approach of a single mind and as a result has a unity of style and approach which is always an advantage in a history of this kind.

However, Sik has tackled an enormous task, and it must be confessed that, while on the whole he succeeds admirably, there are inevitable lacunae. The Portuguese colonies during the war are disposed of in three pages, and their post-war development which, as the recent Lisbon coup demonstrates, has been of continental and indeed world-wide importance is not discussed. There is also a blank on Namibia. May one also complain once again of the lack of an index, which makes consultation of what is undoubtedly a valuable work of reference unnecessarily difficult?

Despite these blemishes the overall value of Sik's work may be gauged by what he himself says in his preface to Volume 3. Rejecting criticisms that his work lacks objectivity, he claims that 'a book of African history that is meant to disclose the objective reality describes the colonialists as ones whose characteristic it is that they are burglars and robbers, oppressors, plunderers and killers of the African peoples, and these peoples are innocent victims of all such colonisers. I am proud of this charge because I could have expected nothing better to prove that I have attained my aim: contrary to the hundreds of books written on African history – overtly or covertly – from the standpoint of the colonialists, I have succeeded in outlining a history of Africa from the viewpoint of its own peoples. I really could have earned no greater praise in the eyes of my African readers, whose opinion is to me most important of all'.

Peter Mackintosh

THE NEW FORMS OF IMPERIALISM

Neo-Colonialism: Methods and Manoeuvres by V. Vakrushev (Progress Publishers, Moscow) as part of the series 'Problems of the Third World'

In his 'Glimpses of World History', the late Jawaharlal Nehru gave a vivid characterisation of the system of indirect colonial exploitation being perfected by the United States. Involved as he then was in the struggle of the Indian people against British colonial rule, he wrote about this far-flung system of indirect oppression and exploitation of nations in these words:

'Profiting by the experience and troubles of other imperialist powers they have improved on the old methods. They do not take the trouble to annex a country, as Britain annexed India; all they are interested in is profit, and so they take steps to control the wealth of the country. Through the control of the wealth it is easy enough to control the people of the country and, indeed, the land itself. And so without much trouble, or friction with an aggressive nationalism, they control a country and share its wealth. This ingenious method is called economic imperialism. The map does not show it. A country may appear to be free and independent . . . *But if you look behind the veil you will find that it is in the grip of another country, or rather, of its bankers and big businessmen'* (my italics).

In the post-war period marked by the rapid disintegration of the principal colonial empires of Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Italy, through successful national liberation struggles of varying forms and degrees of intensity, the old Colonial Policies had perforce to give way to methods and manoeuvres of indirect infiltration, pressure and exploitation in an effort to continue the colonial relationship. It is the combination of economic, political, military, ideological and diplomatic measures undertaken by Imperialism in the wake of the national independence struggles of the colonised peoples for the express purposes of maximum profit that we understand to be the system of Neo-colonialism.

This book, written by a scholar who has written exhaustively about the new relationships between Imperialism and the developing countries in previous studies, is a penetrating study of the new methods pursued by the Neo-Colonialist countries under the hegemony of the United States. In particular the book investigates the new forms under

which the movement of capital takes place: the 'aid' and development programmes; the increased trade relations forced upon the developing countries; and the military machinations of the imperialist countries which serve as a sharp reminder that the basic feature of Neo-Colonialism remains the use of force in an effort to 'contain' socialism and the national liberation movement. NATO, SEATO, CENTO and similar Pacts the author establishes as the other side of the coin of the World Bank, IMF and its subsidiaries, AID (International Development Agency) and the EEC to name only the major agencies of Imperialism.

In lengthy and well-researched chapters dealing with the IMF, the World Bank and the EEC, Vakrushev presents evidence that, despite contradictions that exist within the Imperialist camp, there exists an agreed pact of Colonial Collectivism among them as regards the developing countries. Tables of statistics abound to reveal the extent of imperialist capital domination of most of the countries of the Third World, but what is of singular value are the chapters dealing with the ways in which this domination is accomplished viz: through the agency of international monopolies acting across national barriers with ramified systems of subsidiaries, and through international organisations controlled by the USA such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD; the World Bank), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the AID and EEC. What the author establishes with sound force is the fact that the very participation of the Third World countries in those International Agencies is a means of implementing the policies of Neo-Colonialism since their power in these agencies is limited because of the share capital structure being biased in favour of the Imperialist powers, especially the USA, and also because it enables them to obtain the direct consent of the representatives of the developing countries to dictate the financial policy and direction of 'development' to suit the interests of monopoly capitalism. The 'men of the agencies' determine whether there should be devaluation (the inevitable course dictated before loans granted) or inflation and its consequent savage cut-back in the quality of life of the working people; whether state-controlled sectors should continue to exist or be abandoned in favour of private capital, and the extent of the 'unemployed pool' in any country.

In this sense this study follows closely the formulation, quoted by the author, of the 1969 International meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. 'The imperialists impose on these countries economic agreements and military-political pacts which infringe on their sovereignty; they exploit them through the export of capital, unequal terms of trade; the manipulation of prices, exchange rates, loans and various forms of so-called aid; and pressure by international financial organisations.'

For revolutionaries and progressives throughout the world, but more particularly those in the developing 'normally' independent countries of the Third World concerned with the unfinished nature of the revolutionary process, the social inequalities, violent contrasts between poverty and riches within a single national environment, limited development of the productive forces, chronic depletion of the growth potential economic exploitation pursued by Neo-Colonialism, this book is invaluable reading. The strategy of Neo-Colonialism, ie. maximise profit and force the developing countries into the capitalist system can only be countered by understanding the extent of the problem so that the necessary and correct strategic tasks can be formulated to continue the advance towards all-round liberation and socialism.

N.B.

Letter to the Editor

A FREEDOM FIGHTER IS MURDERED

On March 12, 1974, the South African racists committed a cowardly and dastardly murder of one of the great sons and heroes of the South African revolution – John Dube – popularly known as 'JD'. A parcel bomb, addressed to the Lusaka office of the African National Congress (of South Africa), exploded into his face – killing him and injuring two other comrades. The glass front wall and the roof of the building were blown off. Comrade 'JD' adds to the long list of innocent and unarmed people of our country who have been coldbloodedly and mercilessly murdered by Vorster's racist gang in a desperate attempt to stem the tide of the Revolutionary Movement.

At the time of his assassination Comrade 'JD' was the deputy representative of the Lusaka office of the African National Congress. He left South Africa in June, 1963, to acquire military skills abroad. He was born in one of the black ghettoes of South Africa, Alexandra Township, outside Johannesburg, in February 1930. His family background is working class. He went to school in Alexandra Township, took up mechanics as a profession and later worked on the railways. He joined the ranks of the national liberation movement in the early

fifties.

He was married and had one child. When he left the country he had just got married but he left in answer to the call of the ANC. He remained true to his convictions throughout his years of exile and never deviated from the course of the struggle. His single-mindedness and dedication to the cause of the oppressed of our country was a source of courage and inspiration to us all.

What did the South African racists hope to achieve by the murder of comrade 'JD'? The racist government has made many attempts to destroy and wreck the ANC inside the country and abroad, but all in vain. It is abundantly clear that this dastardly act was calculated to intimidate and frighten off members of the ANC, Mkhonto we Sizwe cadres in particular, and the masses in general.

One must remember that this murder took place on the eve of the elections (April 24) and it becomes very obvious that this was part of the election campaign of the ruling Nationalist Party. It was meant to bolster the waning morale of the electorate.

For recently South Africa has been undergoing hard times. The revolutionary upsurge by workers, students and peasants has made cracks in the white 'granite wall' of apartheid domination. Abroad South Africa is facing increasing isolation – politically, economically, diplomatically and culturally. Added to this is the pending threat of 'terrorist' attack from within, especially with the news from Portugal and the territories in Africa – Angola and Mozambique in particular.

It was also a pre-emptive act on the part of the racist clique – to launch an offensive before we start. Perhaps these desperate acts of individual terrorism are intended to provoke the movement into launching an armed but ill-planned and ill-prepared assault on the apartheid system. This can never happen. But the days of white supremacy in Southern

Africa are getting fewer and fewer.

The killing of comrade 'JD' had yet another aim – to sow seeds of disunity, mistrust, mutual suspicion, rivalry and antagonism among the national liberation movements in Southern Africa. This is why South Africa was very quick to blame the act on one of the national liberation movements. To us the culprit is obvious.

It would be incorrect to take the murders of Tiro in Botswana 11 days before that of 'JD's' in isolation. It was the hand of one and the same murderer. In our eyes, Tiro, as one of the outstanding leaders of the South African Students' Organisation, symbolises the emergence of new revolutionary forces in our country. He too was a victim of a parcel bomb. The racist rulers decided to clamp down on the students' movement for fear of its growing popularity and militancy.

These murders shall not go unpunished. Our appeal is:

- rededication and closer ranks;
- higher vigilance and security;
- closer practical cooperation among the National Liberation Movements.

Mava Lobengula.

(This letter was delayed in the post and arrived too late for inclusion in our last issue. – Ed.)

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